DISCIPLINES OF THE KING: ARTHURIANISM, HISTORIOGRAPHY, POETICS AND SURVEILLANCE IN TENNYSON'S IDYLLS OF THE KING (1859)

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SUMMARY

Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* is a poem about knowledge and power, whose epistemological structure exploits the peculiarities of Arthurian discourse to subvert the forms and practices of disciplinary knowledge as described by Michel Foucault and instantiated in mid-Victorian historiography and poetics. In Tennyson's generation and that immediately previous, Arthurian discourse was understood as exhibiting a peculiar epistemological condition: it was simultaneously and undecideably historiography and poetry. This epistemological duality pitted against one another two variations on a common construction of knowledge. Both historiography and poetry were theorised among Tennyson's generation as the foci of a double disciplinary practice. Each discourse aimed for an individualised and normalised knowledge of its object, and aimed to manipulate a human subjectivity which was one of the components of that object. (Historiography took the relationship between subjects and institutions in each geographical state and historical era as its object. Poetry took the atomised moment of consciousness as its object.) At the same time, both discourses were testing grounds which rendered visible the practices of the self of the authors of discourse. In both, forming the chaotic and unregulated raw material of knowledge into a disciplined shape which could change the reader was a mode of activity in which authorial subjects trained themselves and became the object of the normalising judgement of the very audience they aimed to change. *Idylls of the King* (1859) tackles both aspects of this disciplinary construction of knowledge. On the one hand, it investigates the Round Table as a society of surveillance in which the subject of surveillance is trained by becoming visible to his/her objects. The stories of the Arthurian cycle become examples of the travails of the subject and its practices of the self in this society. In this representation, Tennyson exposes the precarious epistemological, expressive and psychological conditions of success of surveillance. He suggests that surveillance turns on the specific epistemological dilemmas of historians and poets, and that it is an internally unstable mechanism whose epistemological structure leads to ethical uncertainty in its subjects. In the figure of Arthur he offers as his ideal (though not perfect) subjectivity one neither bound to disciplinary objectification nor committed to the form of knowledge of discipline. On the other hand, Tennyson makes the structure of his own poem repeat this critique. The poem offers and withdraws a multiplicity of historiographical and poetic normalisations of its own object (the corpus of Arthurian story). It leaves the reader as the subject of a structure of knowledge which repeats Arthur's -- one in which value is at once an inexhaustible potential of the object and in the eye of the reader, but in which the net of the subject's judgement of value cannot be cast over the object. As such, Tennyson's poem undermines the assumptions of epistemological and political technique which governed not only poetry and historiography in his day but which govern much of the practice of the post-enlightenment state structure of the West as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

Let me begin with a clear statement of the ambitions this thesis does not have. I am not writing a study of Arthurian literature. I am not attempting a survey of Victorian historiographical or poetic theory. I am not tracing a theme through the whole of one man's œuvre. These are tempting propositions, in themselves and in relation to what is my main topic. They are not avenues down which I venture here. What I am concerned with, ultimately, is a simple problem of aesthetic form: the structure and effects of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. The long detour through Arthurian commentary, metahistory and poetics follows from an attempt to elucidate that form. At first glance this is a rather slight, indeed variously studied, theme. It involves, however, a relation important in itself and the object of much current critical and theoretical debate, which in this poem has not received sufficient attention. I am referring to the relation between

aesthetic form, epistemology and the micro-structures of socio-political power.[1] I began by wondering in general why Tennyson had found it useful to revive the Arthurian tradition in a poem whose blatant interests included knowledge and the stability of institutions. I ended by seeing that all these topics, and the complex, multi-layered narrative structure of the poem, were connected. That connection was disciplinary knowledge as it had impacted on mimetic forms of discursive power.

Let me state, briefly, the main lines of argument of the thesis. I start from an assumption that the most immediate hermeneutic context for *Idylls of the King* is not debate about gender, or empire, or the deep self, not even Arthurian legend, but the poem's *condition* as an example of Arthurian narrative. What issues are posed by the very choice of this pre-existing corpus? The question is a historical one, and is answered by a study of early-nineteenth century Arthurian and chivalric historiography, literary historiography, and critical response to the first instalment of *Idylls*. The first two discourses provide a sense of the meaning of Arthurianism as expounded to Tennyson's

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[1] See, for instance, the essays in Murray Krieger, ed., *The Aims of Representation: Subject/Text/History*, Irvine Studies in the Humanities (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1987), the final two chapters of Simon During, *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing* (London, Routledge, 1992), and essays by Stephen Greenblatt and Louis Montrose in H. Aram Veeser, ed., *The New Historicism* (London, Routledge, 1989). Herbert Tucker, "The Epic Plight of Troth in *Idylls of the King*", *English Literary History*, 58 (1991), 701-20, broaches the question of form as a component of ideology, but not of micro-politics.

public by a number of popular as well as specialist writers throughout the first half of the century. The latter provides a more immediate gauge of critical opinion about the corpus at the exact time Tennyson wrote. Tennyson scholarship has tackled all three discussions before. It has not been noted, however, that in all of them Arthurian matter is seen to raise a specific epistemological dilemma. It posits a dual cognitive condition, both of whose components are extremely valuable on their own but whose combination raises special difficulties, or special opportunities. Arthurian narrative, like that of the lost ballads Niebuhr and other historians posited behind the early historians of Rome, was at once a fictional and a factual discourse. It was both a form of history and a form of poetry.

This is not an insignificant point. It means that Arthurianism provides Tennyson with an epistemological form as well as a story. It also means that the structural dilemma the legends pose is not simply one of reconciling disparate narrative contents: how to make one tale of the babel of tales in the whole tradition.[2] It means that any such structure retains an irreducible hermeneutic complexity. This complexity, moreover, involves two humanistic discourses which, over the century preceding Tennyson's poem, had ceased to be mere forms of rhetorical entertainment and become societally pivotal forms of knowledge. For Thomas Carlyle, by 1830, every political and cultural group

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[2]See John Rosenburg, *The Fall of Camelot: A Study of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King"* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1973).

saw history as the ultimate controversial weapon, and it could be dubbed "the root of all science".[3] Conversely, insisted the same man, poetry was the ultimate origin of every "work that man glories in" — the origin, that is, of every form in which value is manifest.[4] According to an influential modern commentator, history and literature may be seen as the determining forms of modern knowledge. A certain kind of historicity — the structural development through time of entities folded in on their own interiority — provides its governing underlying assumption.[5] Poetry, conversely, in which the being of language erupts in an aspect which refuses to be penetrated by such knowledge, is the most extreme manifestation of a mode of being which threatens its entire basis.[6] This suggests that one motive in choosing the Arthurian cycle for a nineteenth century epic might precisely be its epistemological duality. It poses as the elements of a structural dilemma what were seen then and now as pioneering components of the whole civilisation

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[3]Thomas Carlyle, "Thoughts on History", *Fraser's Magazine*, 10 (November 1830).

[4]Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus* (1838), The World's Classics (London, Oxford University Press, 1902), 227-28.

[5]Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London, Tavistock Publications, 1974), 371.

[6]The attempt to render the being of language in its wholeness visible to knowledge may be bringing to light a form which cannot be encompassed within the historicity which governs the modern episteme. ibid., 299-307.

Tennyson participates in. Accordingly, the next stage of an investigation of the immediate hermeneutic context of *Idylls* is an investigation in more detail of the questions that duality embodies. What, in other words, are the rewards and processes history and poetry held out to the nineteenth century?

It would, of course, be the work of several studies, not one, to cover the whole of these two fields in the nineteenth century. In these pages I have had to be drastically summary about the textual sample I refer to — though exercising principles of choice about the sample which render it not entirely nugatory. Before sketching that sample, however, it is worth noting some salient points about the development of both discourses during the century. Both participated in one of the most important reforms in the socio-economic organisation of knowledge during the nineteenth century. They were both at the forefront of the secularisation, professionalisation and academicisation of knowledge about human beings which was one of the innovations of Western European civilisation at this time.[7] In both, this process took place in two steps. In the early part of the century (in Britain at least), historiography and poetry by and large were developed in the literary market-place, and in private, or non-prestigious, educational institutions. As the century

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[7]This process, in the West, is a revival of certain procedures of Classical Mediterranean civilisation, in which what is important is not merely the institutional form but the absence of religion as a governing principle. This had begun long before — Renascences are found as far back as Charlemagne — but only achieves full fruition in the nineteenth century.

progressed, first history, then poetry (by way of its study, at this point, not its production) entered the university and the new state education system.[8] By the 1890s, history had demarcated itself fully as a discipline which could only produce respectable knowledge via the channel of the academy.[9] This was not yet the case with criticism, but the battle

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[8]Let me, in passing, make a point about the relation between criticism and the determination of literature as a form of knowledge governed by the academy. If literature is regarded as a discourse whose ultimate standard of measure is its entry into a canonical series of texts, and both the study of this canon and the arbitration of its content is allowed to happen prestigiously only in the academy, it can be said that literature is governed, as a mode of knowledge, by the academy. In the nineteenth century, the first of these premises was held (though not with the rigorous certainty that it was in the second quarter of the twentieth century), but the second did not.

[9]This can be dated with the establishment of the *English Historical Review* in 1887. It should be noted, as Phillipa Levine has documented, that professionalisation in history began in the state apparatus, with the precursors of the Public Record Office. A cognate process occurred in criticism, in that the first demands for literary education came not only from women's colleges and working-men's institutes but the examinations for the Civil Service. See Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism, 1848-1932*, Oxford English Monographs (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), Phillipa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838 - 86* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History* (Columbus, Ohio State UP, 1985).

had begun.[10] In the course of this development, large claims were made for both discourses as successors to religion in providing society with its ultimate ideological guarantee. Metahistory dreamed of incorporating all the separate knowledges of language, intellectual culture, political and social structure, ethical and ideological type, and economic action, as their interaction was institutionally specified in the organic unity of individual nations, in a total panorama of human progress. This would provide a teleological narrative of God's purposes in the world, purged of archaic or parochial symbol, able to renew or replace Christianity. Poetics, meanwhile, dreamed of a discourse whose metaphors made burgeon the rich soil of the mind — its originary power, its inner haven of repose, its organic responsiveness, its freedom from the literal, its seeing-beyond-the-self and its instruments. This would provide the energy of a renewed ethics and a renewed spirituality, not trammelled by the dogmatic and controversial trappings of the Church.

In these pages, I suggest that, in the earlier part of this development — when both discourses were still largely in the domain of the literary and educational market-place — a number of their most influential practitioners sought to satisfy these ambitions by way of a similar epistemological and expressive technique. Knowledge of the teleology of

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[10]The equivalent moment to the establishment of the *English Historical Review* — the creation of a figurehead journal exemplifying the best in research — did not occur until 1932 with the publication of *Scrutiny*.

human activity, or of the myriad fertility of the human mind, emerged through the same cognitive filter and was made compelling through the same discursive procedure. Both used the epistemological structure of individualising and normalising surveillance. Both, acting out a sense that power is most effective when it avoids prohibition and gains access to the subject by drawing out capabilities from within it, sought to disseminate knowledge through its impressive objectification in representation. With theorists of both discourses, furthermore, the combination of these two practices was seen as the culmination (and therefore the visible test) of a deep and all-encompassing training of the writer's own self, one whose proffering for imitation was at least as important as the direct representation of knowledge and value itself. In other words, they did not merely turn mimetic discourse into a form of surveillance of the mind and the nation. Rather, they made it the conduit of a two way surveillance, of which reader and writer were at once subject and object. As such, Arthurian discourse — that agglomeration of stories which is at once history and poetry — becomes a highly interesting proposition. The dual epistemology pits together two competing discourses in which knowledge was a form of power, two competing experiments with the model of individualising and normalising surveillance, and two competing practices of the self which the discourse is to exemplify.

Before moving to what Tennyson does with this interesting dialogic structure, I want to spell out the scope of the claim I have just made and sketch its theoretical background. First, it should be stressed that it is a new one. Neither Michel Foucault's seminal study of the practices of individualising and normalising knowledge, nor David Miller's application of them to the novel (subsequently the most abundantly powerful of

the nineteenth-century's market forms of knowledge) mentions their importance in historiography and poetry.[11] Second, I make no attempt to decide whether the practices I describe are *importations* from the fields Foucault studies (medical, military, penal, and factory organisation) or parallel developments. I merely say, with Miller, that the "regime of the norm" (the technology of surveillance, of objectified discipline) appears to be

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[11] Foucault's work was published in 1975; I have used the Penguin edition. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1991). D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Los Angeles, Berkeley and London, Univ. of Cal. Press, 1988). Miller's book, along with Alexander Welsh, *George Eliot and Blackmail* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1985) and some papers at the MLA conference in 1994 are the only studies to date which consider the question specifically of the mode of surveillance in literature. None of this work has turned to the question of poetics. Investigation of the practices of historiographical representation in this period, meanwhile, has concentrated on its basis in literary paradigms. See e.g. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Linda Orr, "The Revenge of Literature: A History of History", *New Literary History*, 18, (1986), 1-22; Lionel Grossman, "History and Literature: Reproduction or Signification", *New Literary History*, 18 (1986), 32-57; Mark Phillips, "Macaulay, Scott, and the Literary Challenge to Historiography", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50 1 (January - March, 1989), 117-33; Richard Waswo, "Story as Historiography in the Waverley Novels", *ELH: A Journal of English Literary History*, 47, 2 (Summer 1980), 304-30; Stephen Bann, "The Sense of the Past: Image, Text and Object in the Formation of Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century Britain", in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeser, 102-115.

"diffused in discourses and practices throughout the social fabric".[12] Third, as I noted above, I have had to be drastically summary about the extent of the textual sample I refer to. Three considerations hinder this limitation from being a crippling one, given my ultimate concerns. First, since my original question is about Tennyson, I have focused in the main where he was focused — on what he knew or what he influenced. Second, since his activity impinges on what was of wider collective impact, I have focused in particular where his focus intersects with what was influential on its own account. My historians are the three great figures of early Victorian epic history (the Thomases Arnold, Macaulay, Carlyle). There is a background hum from lesser but still important figures, whom Tennyson also read. My writers of poetics include at least one figure for each of the inflections of expressive poetics of acknowledged importance in the first thirty years of Victoria's reign. I have preferred those who wrote in significant fora, and/or who knew or impacted upon Tennyson. Third, most importantly, what comes out of these texts is complex and important enough to require detailed exposition. As I mentioned above, among the many excellent critical studies of both historiography and poetics in the nineteenth century, none has noted that the epistemological forms they theorise recapitulate the processes of disciplinary knowledge. The point could not be substantiated without a careful unpacking of individual discourses which have myriad affiliations and languages. This makes inevitable a drastic limitation of texts and authors, so that what

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[12]Miller, op. cit., Foreword. See also the brief discussions in Chapters Two and Three of the present thesis about the genealogy of the poetics and meta-history I examine (pp. 69 - 70; 133, fn. 12; 137 - 7).

remains is something that may only be suggestive, not conclusive, for the fields of poetics and historiography as a whole in this century.[13] It also means that I cannot venture into the development of these procedures from the 1860s onward — when the movements for the institutionalisation of both historiography and poetics were gathering pace and achieving success. This, correlatively, forces me to limit the study of *Idylls of the King* to that instalment of it which can be seen as shaped only by the earlier phase of poetic and historiographical expansion: the four poems of 1859.

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[13]It is a source of particular regret that there no space for a consideration of Ruskin. The notion of poetry in the first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843), as the provision of "noble grounds for noble emotions", shows a typical disciplinary form. Discussion of the Grotesque in the mid 1850s, however, sees Ruskin grappling with the evident social value of modes of representation which cannot easily be assimilated to such a model. It is a similar source of regret that I have had no space to consider historiographical theory in the periodical press in general. What little I have had serendipitous occasion to consult — a text in *Fraser's*, two discussions in *Blackwood's* and in the *Edinburgh Review* respectively — suggest a far less pugnacious trust in historical representation as solid knowledge even than in Carlyle. History in these texts comes much closer to the escapist hermeneutic condition of poetry than the major scholarship on historiographical theory has ever suggested. Just how extensive these views were — whether they formed a context of readership against which Macaulay, Arnold and Carlyle struggle — must remain an unanswered, indeed unposed, question in the pages. See "Niebuhr's Ancient History", *Fraser's Magazine*, 46 (1852), 672-87; "The Romantic Drama", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 60 (August 1846), 161-77; Bryan Proctor, "Poetry—Cunningham's Songs", *Edinburgh Review*, 47 (January 1828), 184-204.

What of the theoretical network in which this thesis is situated? Let me explain first the salient features of my interest in the disciplinary model of knowledge, and then why I chose to concentrate on Foucault and do not draw in other theorists of discourse, power and subjectivity, such as Althusser or Eagleton. There are three themes in Foucault's theorisation of modern power which I have taken up in this thesis. These are, respectively, the notion of power-knowledge, the notion of "gentle" power and the notion of the practice of the self. The analysis I offer of the discourses of history and poetry in the middle third of the nineteenth century weaves all three of these together.

Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1975) specifies the general notion of a power-knowledge and its instantiation in the tactic of surveillance. According to Foucault, "Power and knowledge directly imply one another: ... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations".[14] The statement needs to be understood carefully. To say that there is an identity between the relation which constructs knowledge and the relation which constructs power does not necessarily entail that making something visible makes what is visible subjected.[15] Surveillance, as elaborated throughout *Discipline and Punish*, does in the main rely on the latter

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[14]Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1991), 27.

[15]*Discipline and Punish*, op. cit., 187-89.

realisation of power-knowledge, as do other techniques Foucault elaborates, such as the technique of confession.[16] However, Foucault also notes that the feudal model of political power and certain models of criminal punishment constructs power-knowledge in quite the opposite way. Displaying the monarch on a ceremonial progress, in the coin of the realm or in Sunday prayers for her safety is a reminder that the observer has to obey, not vice versa. Each power-knowledge also has its own construction of knowledge itself, its own way of characterising the identities of its subject and object, which make it more or less suitable in particular institutions.

In the technology of surveillance there are two such constructions, one elaborated by Foucault, the other not fully explored in his work but of some relevance to the power-knowledge circuit constituted by history and poetry. The first is the mode of individualising and normalising knowledge itself. Classically, this operates by distributing and displaying entities within an enclosed space, analysing the performance of each individually, measuring it for its attainment of a norm, placing it in a hierarchy of norms, and ensuring that the entity is always subject to this interrogative presence. (The enclosure, however, is not necessary — only the efficacy of the threat of investigation.)[17]

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[16] For a discussion of "confession", see *The History of Sexuality: Volume One, The Will to Truth*, op. cit., 58 - 68.

[17] This form of power-knowledge is now particularly rife as a means for financial institutions to assess the suitability of customers.

As such it is an expression of power which posits a number of things in its object. It posits the uniqueness of every entity over which it reigns, but only so that it can make each of those entities approximate better to the behaviours it wishes to see. It also posits an interior potentiality and malleability in its objects, but only insofar as it assumes that they have the capacity to perform as it wishes and change their behaviour accordingly. The second mode of power-knowledge at work in the technology of surveillance concerns the visibility of the normalised behaviour it wishes to instil.[18] Strictly, the norm need only be present as an abstract example: it need not be personified in the observer, for the observer is only a position, one which may be filled by many actual individuals and which does not need to be visible to take effect. However, in many of the institutions which employ surveillance — prisons, schools, asylums, factories — a hierarchy of privilege operates which rewards and punishes those who rise or slide in the estimation of the observer. Observation itself may be carried out by those who have achieved a certain level of normalisation of their behaviour. (The school pupil who takes the position of monitor is an instance of this.) In other words, from the point of view of the object of power, a power-knowledge operates in which what is seen becomes an incentive to obey. Atop the direct threat of measurement directed at the self, there is a more subtle beguilement — a continuous, emotively valent representation of experience within the

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[18]Some of what I point out below is discussed in Foucault's much earlier work on the treatment of the insane. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. R. Howard, paperback edition (Routledge, London, 1971), 245 - 51.

grasp of surveillance, which whispers to the individual: *Do so-and-so and you shall reap so-and-so*, or *Isn't so-and-so a lovely thing to aspire to/a horrid thing to avoid.* This mode of power-knowledge again posits the individuality of the subject, and its potentiality and malleability, for it would have no effect were the subject not to imagine itself as personally addressed by its representation, and not to change as a result of it. However, this time, it is not merely an empty individuality or changeability, it is an interiority which has its own autonomy, affectivity and rationality.

Discipline and Punish also specifies the notion of "the gentle way in punishment". This is one facet of a general mode of power Foucault expands on in *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: The Will to Truth* (1976).

> Since the classical age the West has undergone a very profound transformation of ... mechanisms of power. ... One might say that the ancient right to *take* life or *let* live was replaced by a power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death ... One of the poles [of this power] ... centred on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimisation of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility.[19]

The mode of power we are concerned with thus does not seek to lacerate or mark its object, but to fill it with capabilities and productiveness which are pleasing to power.

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[19]Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume One, The Will to Truth*, trans. R. Hurley (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1990), 136-9.

These capacities are not merely physical, but intellectual and moral — for instance, the instilling of the importance of punctuality and steadiness of effort in those who are to work in the factory. This form of power also seeks to reduce its own dependence on fear and coercion, hoping to gain its object's internal agreement with its subjection — the object's identification with the aims regarding itself and its powers that power wishes it to achieve. In the specific form of surveillance, this mode of power is personified in three ways. First, the time and experience of its objects is organised — for instance workers or children must perform particular actions at particular periods which they do not choose. Second, what they do is constantly measured against a standard of acceptable performance, whether in the work itself or its satellite moral conditions — this is the individualising and normalising power-knowledge referred to above. Third, this measurement is reinforced with systems of tangible and symbolic rewards, granted to successful or improved performance, and punishments, meted for unsuccessful or deteriorating performance. (The latter rarely go to the extent of inflicting physical pain, but do play up the humiliation and shame of being humbled before the collective of the institution — for instance, being made to wear a dunce's cap.) The subjectivity this form of power posits in its object is largely the same as that posited by the two power-knowledges of surveillance — except insofar as it does not require the individuality in its object, only a generic susceptibility and rationality which may choose and respond.

To invoke the institution of surveillance as an instance of power-knowledge and modern power is useful, for my purposes, in a number of ways. The relationships and characteristics they describe are a very close model for the intricate circularity of

technique by which poetry and history are projected as discourses of social cohesion. Poetics and metahistory posit an identity between what poetry and history know and what poetry and history attempt to influence. (Poetry knows the mind and bids for social control by invoking and controlling states of mind. History knows the intricacies of the relationship between individual and collective responsibility in the nation and bids for social control by guiding the formation of that relationship.) Both discourses instantiate the relationship of power and knowledge by individualising and normalising their object and making it pass through an organisation of experience which presents the norm as sublime and beautiful and as a gift to the object. (The knowledges of the mind or of the relationship between the subject and the institution is a gift to mind in general or to the developing relationship between subject and institutions precisely because they are in individualised and normalised morsels — chunks of illumination. At the same time, these knowledges are effective — are accepted as true and acted on — by taking specific minds and subjects relating to institutions through an ordered experience which is presented as pleasant to them.) There is a complication, of course, in that in both cases the object of power-knowledge is not the individual human subject as such, but a general element in which the human subject partakes. (Poetry is turned on objects which, in constant flux, are the substance of the human subject, while history is turned on objects in which the human subject is one pole of a relation.) Both discourses also never turn their knowledge fully and directly on the particular entity which they need to change in order to change their own objects. They may only surround the particular subjectivities of their readers with discourses which address them as instances of the general object which discourse

wishes to form. (Poetry never looks at any of its readers in person: history, being a knowledge of the past, never looks directly at the present relation between subject and institution.) However, this does not reduce the usefulness of the model of surveillance. First, the point is not to claim that history and poetry are surveillance institutions, but to note that they employ the techniques of surveillance, though broken up and re-arranged. Second, though surveillance classically composes a dossier, a record, of the individual human subjects it seeks to change, the regimes of organised experience it sets in place to bring about that change also do not address that subject in its totality or individuality. Rather, they form a grid, a codification of activity, which is meant to serve as the template for every subject that passes through the surveyed space, and which seeks to form only those elements of the subject which are relevant to the productive capacity power wishes to have wielders of. What is missing in the refraction of discipline at work in poetry and historiography, in other words, is only the stage which puts to the test the individual subject which is being addressed by the regime. (This missing stage came later, when history and poetry become knowledges which are examined in schools and universities.)

The notion of a practice of the self introduces a slightly different notion of power. In *The History of Sexuality Volume 2: The Use of Pleasure* (1984), Foucault formulates the notion in relation to the problem of the formation of the self as a subject of ethics. In the language noted above, a "practice of the self" is a means whereby the subject engages in a particular kind of self-normalisation: not the carrying out of strictly demarcated acts,

as the subject under surveillance must, but the formation of the self as a being which has responsibility to act normally.

> The individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal. And this requires him to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself. [20]

This process is emphasized when formal "codes" of behaviour are relatively simple or inelaborate. It substitutes for the testing of normalisation by a constant requirement to follow a complicated set of rules or codified procedures a testing in which:

> [the emphasis is on] what is required in the relationship [the subject] has with himself [sic], in his different actions, thoughts, and feelings as he endeavours to form himself ... on the exercises by which he makes of himself an object to be known, and on the practices that enable him to transform his own mode of being.[21]

These formulations are useful because the discourses of historiography and poetry, though they constitute a form of surveillance of the mind and the nation, are not carried out by an

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[20] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume Two: The Uses of Pleasure*, trans. R. Hurley, Vintage Books edition (Vintage Books, New York, 1990), 28.

[21] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume Two: The Uses of Pleasure*, trans. R. Hurley, Vintage Books edition (Vintage Books, New York, 1990), 30.

impersonal subject. The subject's exercise of power-knowledge in them is, instead, the culmination of a self-discipline which makes the subject of knowledge an exemplary instance of the whole normative regime on behalf of which a poem or historical narrative will make one measurement. Moreover, the structures of enforcement which surround this self-discipline are at once highly intermittent, peremptory and non-codified. (The norms which compose the superior mind are not hard to state, only to ascertain: the test of it is no more and no less that every publication: the sanction is [for the poet and historian who lives by his words] the choice between power and poverty.) It is, in other words, much more a practice of the self that is at stake in the reflection of norms in the subject of discourse than it is a subjectification by surveillance.

Why have I chosen to approach historiography and poetry in terms of Foucault's conceptual toolkit? After all, what I describe as their general intent — a value-rich representation of nations and states of mind, a claim to provide a knowledge which can take on the social function of religion — would seem more obviously described as an ideological project. It is certainly the case that these discourses have functions which are as much concerned with the "false" formation of consciousness — with the construction of an "imaginary" relation of the subject to its social conditions — as with any philosophically free investigation of their objects. For the historians I consider, for instance, it is essential that history construct a view of the relation between the subject and its institutional conditions which favours the gradualism of bourgeois led changes to the nation's political structure. The subject is always bound by limits, bequeathed by the past, upon what can be changed — so that a revolutionary project is untenable — but is

also free to question every element of what has been bequeathed for its continuing utility — so that the status quo is liable to reform. For almost all of the theorists of poetry I consider, similarly, it is more interesting to represent certain states of mind than others, and there are more or less overt relations between these preferences and the traditionalist, bourgeois radical, liberal or even religious positions of the theorist. In other words, in both discourses, the construction of "knowledge" so that it ignores, occludes, distorts or devalues perceptions which are thought to put a cherished social order in question is an overt factor. It can also be argued that the object of knowledge posited for each discourse serves an ideological function of this sort. To focus on the nation state, or on hypostasized states of mind, it can be argued, attunes history and poetry to the political and psychological instruments of bourgeois hegemony.

However, both discourses place a premium on aspects of representation which cannot simply be understood in terms of ideology. For one thing, the objects of knowledge of poetry and history do not quite match the hegemonic objects of bourgeois ideology. Poetry can only communicate values if it implies an analysis of the conditions of consciousness;[22] while its specific object — particular states of mind — actually

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[22] I discuss this in chapter three. Isobel Armstrong's *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (Routledge, London, 1993) analyses this aspect of Victorian poetics at comprehensive length.

undermines the notion of the autonomous human subject of bourgeois ideology.[23] History, on the other hand, actually takes as its object many collectives other than the nation state — the Catholic Church, the institution of chivalry, for instance — and therefore contains the possibility of dissolving the nation in wider stratifications, as did Karl Marx. Just as importantly, very few theorists were prepared even to go as far as Froude, for whom history was admittedly a rhetorical exercise designed to make values impressive which were not derived from a study of the past. In both history and poetry, the really valuable representation was generally one which, in the ways suitable to each discourse, allowed values to arise from the most phenomenologically acute and rationally defensible vision of its object. This was what was behind the premium poetics put on accurate and particularized delineation of natural objects and the premium metahistory put on sources. It is not enough, in other words, to consider the content that was ruled in or out by the epistemological construction of these discourses. One must in fact consider what it is that made them effective as representations which let themselves be open to contradiction on grounds other than those of ideology. One must, in other words, consider the question of technique — of the relations of power implicit in the mode by which their objects were constituted, and the mode by which the subject was enabled to make up that constitution. This is particularly crucial given that my aim is not to understand history and poetry in isolation, but as the epistemological components of

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[23] See J. F. Ferrier's *Institutes of Metaphysics* (1852) for a continuous discussion of the philosophical incompatibility of the autonomous subject and states of mind psychology.

Arthurian discourse. From the point of view of these components, what was ideological was never in doubt: Arthurian discourse was the narrative of a Christian monarch building and defending a Christian state, also touching questions of romantic love, bravery, protection of the weak, heroism and hierarchy. What was in question was the way in which these ideological values could be constituted as knowledge: the kind of narrative Arthurian discourse allowed, the kinds of empirical evidence against which it could be evaluated, the mode in which it related to empirical experience, the realism or otherwise of the mind which produced it.

It is this which leads me to Foucault, for it is Foucault who concentrates on the tactics of power — its modes of operation, its ensemble of ways and means — as a reality which is relatively autonomous of the strategic intentions these tactics serve. It is not that Foucault provides the only consideration of these themes, or that they exclude others, but that Foucault's are the most appropriate for the objects I consider. For instance, it might be thought that the effectiveness of historical and poetic representation as a mode of power can be best described by the Althusserian notion of the interpellation of the subject. When the reader encounters a poem or a piece of historical writing, the representation "hails" the reader, positing him or her as an individual who lives in the kind of world the discourse presents: an individual who recognises, say, that his or her subjectivity is of the same kind as the poet's, with experiences and determinations and dilemmas which its evaluation places. (J. S. Mill's neurotically healing self-recognition in Wordsworth's view of the human subject in contact with value as emotion is a good example of this — becoming part of the way Mill lives his life as adaptation of utilitarianism.) However, as

Eagleton notes, the notion of interpellation actually says nothing about *how* the subject recognises itself: nothing about how the representation ensures that the subject is obedient or even takes notice.[24] It is here that Foucault's analyses of power-knowledge, "gentle" power and practice of the self are preferable. In the technology of surveillance, when faced with a representation of normalised experience — with an ideological image — the subject recognises it and relates to it because of the quite tangible rewards and punishments which attend that relation. At the same time, to approach a representation is not merely to be faced with something separate from the subject, for the representation must be produced by the subject itself: I must read the words of a poem or history, and make them into a representation myself. In other words, ideological representation can only be effective in terms of the structuring of consciousness it posits as the condition of being interpreted by the subject: in terms, that is, of the power-knowledge relations within which it designates something as known, and the practices of the self implied in the subject of that designation.

The most practical reason for using Foucault's concepts is their relevance to the existential, epistemological and political themes which Tennyson's poem takes up from discussions of historiography and poetics. These do not relate to the mere subjection of individuals — their construction in "false consciousness". The poem is not about how people arrive at, or are deceived into, the beliefs they set out to represent, or the relation

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[24] Terry Eagleton, *Ideology* (Verso, London, 1991), 145.

between these beliefs and political conflict. All this is taken as read. At the same time, the poem is not a lesson in how people are born into an ideology and live out their political conflicts through it. Instead, *Idylls* takes from history and poetry its concern with the construction of the self in acts of knowledge and representation which are at once the wielding of power over others and a rendering of oneself to judgement before them. The poem is about problems of trust, judgements of other people's sincerity and acumen, how subjects relate to each other as friends, lovers and colleagues in a single political project, how they construct happy or unhappy experiences of themselves as they relate to institutions in which they believe, and how *this* level of experience relates to the complex and reciprocal processes of offering images of the self and of values which are intended to have ideological effect. It is Foucault in general who provides a conceptual framework which allows us to historicize such questions, for it is he who opens out the problem of the practices of the self, the modes in which the subject constructs the other in knowledge, and how these questions relate to particular institutions rather than sempiternal dilemmas.

As is now evident, the epistemological duality of Arthurian narrative opens on a potential of grave import for nineteenth-century society. It renders structural questions of knowledge which impinge upon the developing, multiple bureaucracies of the bourgeois state — and not only the form of knowledge but the identities and life-narratives based on it. Tennyson takes up the whole of this context in *Idylls of the King*. Even in the 1859 version, he re-writes the decline of Camelot so that it thematizes practices of surveillance, objectified discipline and the production of normalised representations. Moreover, he exploits the cognitive hesitation of Arthurian discourse so that it embodies this

deconstruction hermeneutically. He ensures that any desire the reader has to identify with the gazes of historiography or poetics must face the spectacle of its own bamboozlement, its own self-deception. Implicitly, this questions not only the historiographic and poetic echo of disciplinary procedure, but the whole mode of discipline itself. Tennyson makes clear that the very interiority discipline must posit if it is to elicit and train the subject's potential requires that not all of this potential rise to the surface of visibility. As such, my initial question can be satisfactorily answered. Arthurian narrative is in no way adventitious to the poem's concern with knowledge and the stability of institutions and morality. It is in fact the form through which these concerns may be rendered a hermeneutic experience as well as a represented one. It is the form through which such questions may be brought into contact with some of the most deep-seated movements of modern Western civilisation.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF ARTHURIAN HISTORY

I want to begin with the raw narrative matter of *Idylls of the King* — specifically, with a question which has not been explored by critics of this or any other nineteenth-century Arthurian venture. What was the epistemological status of Arthurian writing in the mid-nineteenth century? *Idylls*'s Arthurian theme in general has been the subject of considerable scholarly analysis, covering the poem's sources, literary milieu, links with Victorian medievalism and immediate critical reception.[1] No-one as yet, however, has suggested that Arthurianism and *Idylls of the King* share problems of knowledge and discursive (as opposed to literary) genre. That knowledge

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[1]See David Staines, *Tennyson's Camelot: The Idylls of the King and its Medieval Sources* (Waterloo, Waterloo University Press, 1982); Roger Simpson, *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson, 1800-49* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990); Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1981); E. F. Shannon, Jr., *Tennyson and the Reviewers* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1952); J. Philip Eggers, *King Arthur's Laureate: A Study of Tennyson's "Idylls"* (New York, New York University Press, 1971).

is a running theme of the poem, in the guise of perceptual relativism and interpretative failure, is a critical commonplace. That Arthurian matter also involves these problems, and in our period specifies them as problems of poetic and historical discourse, is not acknowledged. Nineteenth-century critics, however, were aware of this aspect of Arthurianism. The 1859 reviews of the poem, like those of Tennyson's earlier Arthurian forays, regularly join expectations about truth in poetry to the question of the kind of truth residing in traditions of King Arthur.[2] As we shall see, the assumptions upon which such statements are based reflect a widespread consensus not only about poetry and Arthurian story, but also historiography. They establish writing about King Arthur, prior to any intervention on Tennyson's part, as a *topos* of questions of representation, knowledge, and their social purpose.

It is the object of this chapter to set out this *topos*. Doing so will enable me to suggest that Arthurian discourse is formally, as well as thematically, bound up with the development of disciplinary power in the nineteenth century. This, in turn, will help lay the ground for examining Tennyson's version of Arthurian story in terms of discipline. I shall proceed by examining four groups of texts, all of which have something to tell us about Victorian attitudes to Arthurian writing. Three of these are historiographical, taking as their subjects respectively Arthur as a sixth-century figure, medieval chivalric romance, and the so-called code of chivalry. The fourth is literary

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[2]See, for instance, Sterling's well known *Quarterly Review* article on the 1842 volume.

critical, the 1859 reviews of *Idylls of the King*. Each set of texts illuminates the others. This is not a matter of tracing a genealogy of ideas about Arthurian writing. These texts demonstrate four different ways of resolving common problems perceived in Arthurianism. Each discourse grapples with the hybrid epistemological claims of Arthurian discourse, its mixing of supposedly historical and supposedly poetic valences. Each evaluates this mixture by speculating on the moral and social being of its authors, and the national, religious, and vocational identities which determine that being. Each, however, has slightly different preoccupations with Arthurian writing, ensuring that final judgements on these matters are different.

Arthurian Epistemology I: Historiography

I shall begin with a survey of early and mid Victorian Arthurian historiography. The texts I shall consider are histories, mentioning Arthur, written for the most part in the first sixty years of the nineteenth century.[3] (Some eighteenth century texts Tennyson and most other educated Victorians knew are also included.) To focus here is to take a slightly different approach to Tennyson's Arthurianism in

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[3]I have not taken into account texts written after 1860. Tennyson's own research on Celtic Britain and the Arthurian legends was complete by this date. I have not found any works on Celtic history of the period published between this date and 1879, by which time *Idylls* was completely written and published in its entirety, bar "Balin and Balan". Works of the late 1870s are not therefore of much use in examining the epistemology of Arthur as it relates to *Idylls*.

Idylls of the King than previous scholarship. Almost all of this scholarship has been about Tennyson's medieval or Celtic sources. Though important, such study can tell us nothing about the valence of Tennyson's subject matter for the nineteenth century. It can reveal little about the character of *Idylls* as an intervention in nineteenth-century developments in power-knowledge, whatever it might tell us about Tennyson's influence on an even now powerfully resonant tradition of narrative. There are two works, however, of indisputable value for Tennyson criticism, which *have* examined Victorian Arthurian writing. Unfortunately, neither is quite adequate for my purposes. Paden's *Tennyson in Egypt* (1942) focuses on a handful of pseudo-anthropological texts. These texts comprise only a minor strain of the historiography concerning Arthur.[4] Their main speculation (Arthur is the name of a deity or principle in "Helio-Arkite" Paganism) is also of questionable help, except as a context for Tennyson's very early Arthurian sketches. Roger Simpson's *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson, 1800-1849* (1990), on the other hand, which does consider the historiography as a whole, subsumes it in a wider literary field — an "historical

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[4]Edward Davies's *Mythology and Rites of the Ancient Britons* (London, 1816), for instance mentions Arthur only twice, and in passing. While the proposition that he is "mythological" is of course an important historical proposition, the Helio-Arkites are uninterested in history and make nothing of the matter. Arthur is simply another Hercules et. al. in a conjectural system of principles which reduces thousands of years and hundreds of thousands of square miles to a static religious apostasy. Algernon Herbert's *Brittania After the Romans* (London, 1836 - 41), on the other hand, which gives the symbolic Arthur a specific history, is worth attention.

tradition" which includes historic*ist* poems and prose fictions, as well as historiography proper. As Simpson notes, *Idylls of the King* descends in this lineage — one of the four generic forms Simpson traces for Arthurian writing in the first half of the nineteenth century. It does so particularly in the interest long poems in it have in national and religious identity. Nonetheless, the historiographical texts pose epistemological issues at the forefront of their discussions, which other texts in Simpson's "historical" line do not.[5] Simpson does not bring out these epistemological concerns. They are of great importance in understanding the Arthurianism of Tennyson's poem. They are of great help in understanding the implications of Arthurian subject matter for a nineteenth-century readership.

There are divergent views among the historians about the mode of existence, and achievement, of King Arthur. He is regarded as the hero of a tribal epic poem;[6]

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[5]The shorter texts Simpson discusses focus on national issues. I have not read the longer texts, so must rely on his summaries, which again consistently deal with political themes. It is worth noting, however, that the Rev. Frederick Faber, in the preface to his *Sir Lancelot* (1844) does raise the problem of his text's historicism as a relation between fact and representation. *Sir Launcelot* was one of the few contemporary Arthurian fictions in Tennyson's library by the 1850s. (See the incomplete catalogue in Harvard Notebook MS.ENG.952 (27).)

[6]J. M. Kemble, *The Saxons in England* (London, 1849), 27 - 8; T. Wright, *Essays on subjects connected with the Literature, Popular Superstitions, and History of England in the Middle Ages* (London, 1846), I, 96; II, 44 - 45.

the symbol of a political and religious hegemony;[7] a minor chieftain;[8] a paramount chieftain;[9] or a pan-European emperor.[10] He is a complete military failure, retrospectively aggrandised;[11] a relatively successful if fractious cattle-raider, involved in war against the Saxons;[12] a more far-sighted resister of Saxon advance;[13] or the

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[7]Algernon Herbert, *Brittania After the Romans* (London, 1836 - 41).

[8]Joseph Ritson, *The Life of King Arthur* (London, 1825). Ritson has chapters on Arthur's battles, cattle-raids and palaces, not his constitutional position. The overall impression is that he was King only of part of Britain. Kemble and Herbert also assert that a figure such as Arthur, if he existed at all (which they do not believe) would have "suffered a preponderance of ill-success" (Herbert, 83) or been involved not in the defence of "a brave and united people" but "skirmish[es], carried on by very small numbers on either side" (Kemble, 19 - 20).

[9]Sharon Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 3rd ed., 3 vols. (London, 1820), 268; John Jones, *The History of Wales* (London, 1824), 35 - 38; Edwin Guest, "On the Early English Settlements in South Britain", *Proceedings of the Archeological Institute at Salisbury* (1849), 40; Julia Corner, *An Interesting Narrative of the Conquest of the Britons by the Saxons* (1850). (Corner's book is for young children; it mentions that Arthur was "said to have" fought bravely.)

[10]Richard Williams Morgan, *The British Kymry* (Ruthin and London, 1857), 140 - 41.

[11]Kemble, 18 - 20; Herbert, 83.

[12]Turner, 264 - 71; Ritson, chapters 16 - 18.

[13]Jones, 35 - 8; Guest, 36 - 43.

Napoleon of his day and founder of Chivalry as a code of manners.[14] Beneath this surface variety certain common — and connected — themes emerge. These all concern not Arthur himself but the extreme interpretative problems of Arthurian history: the diversity of its sources, their wide dispersal in space and time, their contradictory perspectives and claims for Arthur as a man and as a political figure. Most importantly, they figure the difficulty of drawing lines between what is legendary, poetic, or propagandist in Arthurian texts, and what is reliable factual tradition.

Before examining this historiography, it is worth noting that a number of influential and popular multi-volume Histories mention Arthur. They all do so in such a way as to mark, even in a short space, that his period is a kind of scandal or crux for History proper. Edward Gibbon and David Hume, for instance, whose monumental histories of Rome and England remained widely read in Tennyson's time, both confirm that King Arthur fought and ruled.[15] Both also play up the figure of Arthur as a discursive topic. For Gibbon, "the events of [Arthur's] life are less

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[14]Morgan, 140 - 41.

[15]Edward Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, A New Edition, 12 vols, (London, 1807), VI, 390 - 91. David Hume, *History of England, with the Author's last corrections*, 8 vols (Edinburgh, 1803), 34. The edition of Hume is the one in Tennyson's father's library; Tennyson acquired an 1871 edition of the work later.

interesting than the revolutions of his fame" — the historico-literary tradition descending from him.[16] Hume talks of Arthur's "military atchievements" [sic] being "blended with ... many fables", and of "certain history" being "disfigure[d]" by "fictions".[17] In the nineteenth-century, John Lingard's *History of England*, regarded by mid-Victorian historiographers as a better text-book than Hume's,[18] similarly notes Arthur's "fictitious glory", stressing how little is really known about the man.[19] Macaulay, meanwhile, is worth citing in full:

> Concerning all the other provinces of the Western Empire we have continuous information. It is only in Britain that an age of fable completely separates two ages of truth. Odoacer and Totila, Euric and Thrasimund, Clovis, Fredegunda, and Brunechild, are historical men and women. But Hengist and Horsa, Vortigern and Rowena, Arthur and Mordred are mythical persons, whose very existence may be

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[16]Gibbon, VI, 391 - 92.

[17]Hume, I, 34.

[18]See Phillipa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archeologists in Victorian England, 1838 - 86* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), 138.

[19]John Lingard, *The History of England* (London, 1854), I, 51. (Lingard's book was originally published in Paris in 1836.)

> questioned, and whose adventures may be classed with those of Hercules and Romulus.[20]

The only thing that strikes him about Arthurian history, as we can see, is the epistemological difficulty it poses.

With each of these historians, concerned in a long work to give only what information is essential, Arthur looms as a figure strangely blending factual existence with fabulous reputation. This blend is understood disapprovingly, as interference between incompatible discursive modes. It renders a fair assessment of him — a recital of the dates of his reign, the events in it, the geographical extent of his power — almost impossible. In the histories which give more extended consideration to the topic of Arthur, the same ideas occur, but elaborated. The problematic interface between fact and fiction is repeated, and linked to the social and moral being of the authors of the sources for Arthurian history and their eras.

Henry Buckle's summary in his controversial *History of Civilisation in England* (1857) is a case in point. Buckle's work caused a great deal of discomfort among other historiographers, for discounting human free will as a historical agent,

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[20] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *History of England*, Everyman edition, 3 vols. (London, Toronto and New York, 1915), I, 12-13. Note that Macaulay says Arthur et al. "may" be thought of as unreal, not "should".

and commending statistical methods in the search for laws of historical change.[21] What he says about Arthurian historiography, however, adumbrates uncontroversial ideas about the main difficulties involved. He considers the topic as part of an assessment of the antecedents of historiography, and of the historiography of the Middle Ages. "The materials for studying the earliest condition of Europe have long since perished", he writes.[22] These materials are "different local traditions", bardic or skaldic (i.e. oral and poetic), variant in relation to each other, but separately and locally "accurate".[23] Though "strictly speaking, no history", they are "founded on truth", and, "making allowance for the colouring of poetry", even "true".[24] The advent of a literacy confined to the clerical caste dissolved and diluted all this, amalgamating the traditions, interpolating Christian matter and swallowing any tale, however eccentric.[25] "Not satisfied with the absence of truth [clerical historians and their ready

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[21]Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, 76 -77; and Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History*, 174-6, both mention this. Jann's endnotes have a useful bibliography of responses to Buckle in the periodidical press. See also pamphlets by Robert Drummond, "Free Will in Relation to Statistics" (1860), and Thomas Hatchard, "Examination of Buckle's History of Civilisation in England. By a Country Clergyman. From the Christian Observer" (London, 1858).

[22]Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilisation in England*, 2 vols (London, 1857), I, 267.

[23]Buckle, 268 - 72; 283.

[24]Buckle, 271.

[25]Buckle, 284.

readership] supplied its place by the invention of falsehood."[26] A respectable blending of history and poetry, based on truth, gives way to a disrespectful one, based on misunderstanding, propagandist falsehood, and invention. The first had been kept in place by the "lively ... interest" of "singers" and auditors in preserving national "traditions ... laws, and contracts".[27] The "most powerful" "cause" of the subsequent degradation is clerical authorship: clerics are gullible themselves, and have an institutional stake in keeping others so.[28]

Buckle cites Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, particularly in its Arthurian section, as typifying this process. "Different accounts had been circulated respecting this celebrated King; but their comparative value was still unsettled."[29] Geoffrey's "researches" made out of these traditions a farrago of far-fetched military success, magic and romance. He, his associate "Archdeacon" historian Walter, and generations of incompetent historians and ignorant general

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[26]Buckle, 272 - 84.

[27]Buckle, 271.

[28]Buckle, 283. Buckle, for all his scientistic rhetoric, is entirely a man of his times in retailing anti-Catholic and anti-clerical stereotypes. See T. B. Macaulay, *History of England*, Everyman edition, I, 25 -27 for a corrective to this view.

[29]Buckle, 294 - 5.

readers after him, were "quick to believe" that this salmagundi was true.[30] The merging of History and Poetry in the figure of Arthur, and its consequent nullity for historiography, is then complete. It results from the bad faith both of the writers and readers of history, but it is the writers, faulted for their Roman Catholic soft-headedness, who had the opportunity to do better.

The way Buckle characterizes the sources of sixth-century history, medieval or earlier, reflects a broad consensus among nineteenth-century historiographers. Arthur emerges as someone immured in a vast chain of textuality, none of whose links conclusively records facts, none of which conclusively makes them up. Rather than abandon this tradition, however, a number of historians (unlike Buckle) try to make sense of it.[31] Devoting large tracts to a discussion of sources, they highlight (in one

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[30]Buckle, 296 - 98.

[31]As with the parallel case of early Roman history, there is a possibility that under the accretions of bardic and romantic embellishment, real historical events exist. The high profile historiographers, Thomas Arnold and Thomas Macaulay, both wrote about the early Roman legends. These seem to have been a more respectable topic for historiography than Arthurian legend. No doubt this arose partly from the greater prestige of Classical history in nineteenth-century England. More pertinent, however, was the pioneering work of the German historian, Niebuhr. His work on early Roman history had established many of the procedures for evaluating sources; and for sifting fact from fiction in the "frontier" area of national romance and epic. (See Thomas Arnold, *The History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides* (Oxford and London, 1842), vii - viii; T. B. Macaulay, "Preface",

case deliberately) the epistemological crux Arthurian writing presents to historiography.[32] The results of these discussions are often sharply divergent and complicated to summarise. They concur, however, in assessing all the sources as factual tradition elaborated or hollowed out, in varying degrees, by exaggeration, omission or invention. Like Buckle, they also all link the extent and type of interference as much to an author's national identity and poetic or religious vocation as to distance from the events they describe.

Three discussions, three Arthurs, recur.[33] One is connected to the sixth-century battle of Badon Hill and speculation about the earliest sources (the purported

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Lays of Ancient Rome (1843); The discussion in H. H. Milman, "Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome", *Quarterly Review*, 71 (March 1843), 454 - 57 is also illuminating.)

[32]Jones is an exception, though elsewhere he discusses the bardic tradition. Ritson's posthumous effort is the book which seems designed to highlight the difficulties of sixth-century historiography. A short editorial preface cites his mounting scepticism during research, one eventually held off. In the work itself, clear preliminary chapters on Roman Britain cloud, as Ritson's narrative approaches Arthur, into a dense miasma of irreconcilable source-citations.

[33]The "two Arthurs" tradition that Paden traces — one historical, one a symbol in a Helio-Arkite religious system — does not really suface in the historiography. Joseph Ritson, for instance, explicitly rejects this kind of speculation. Edwin Guest refers to the "mythical system of exposition" of Arthurian history. He means, however, the assertion of historians like John Kemble, Francis Palgrave and the German Lappenburg that Arthurian stories are fictions, not any ideas of religious symbolism. ("Mythical" connotes "invented", not "religiously valent".) Even Algernon Herbert, who sees Arthur

history of Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the biographical Gildas and Nennius). One links to Welsh hagiographies, and to Welsh didactic and poetic materials (the so-called Bardic and triadic poems; the *Mabinogion*). One is the problem Buckle concentrates on — an Arthur adapted from Breton oral tradition, passing into Anglo-Norman literary creation via Geoffrey and his mentor Walter. With the first, controversy centres on the way knowledge of events, but also of ecclesiastical and patriotic interests, interfere with the accurate recording of facts. It can be argued, for instance, that the Chronicle maintains a "discreet silence" about a chieftain who held up the Saxon conquest for a generation.[34] Bede may be implicitly trusted as a churchman, or his interest in the actions of pagan forebears doubted for

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as a symbol for Druidism and agrees that Druidism was of the Helio-Arkite type, is more concerned with Arthur's multi-valent political status than his religious meanings. (He stands for — but is not — a war-god, a sun-god, a culture-hero, a whole theology, the political dominance of this theology, the hopes of its adherents, and Attila the Hun.) Tennyson had certainly read Faber, the doyen of the Helio-Arkitists, and was given Rev. Ed. Davies's *Mythology and Rites of the Ancient Druids* (1816) in the late 1840s. His Arthur, however, is mythical in the sense that Kemble used the word: he is a legendary figure, "the hero of an epic", not an item in a system of worship.

[34]"Discreet silence" is Gibbon's phrase. Guest makes this argument, acknowledging the other sets of sources but not using them as primary evidence. He also, uniquely, brings in archeological evidence, namely, boundary ditches. Morgan bases his case on an analysis of the Chronicle (Morgan, 134 -37), while asserting that the Welsh traditions are unbroken and "pure" (Morgan, iv - v), and accepting even the extravagances of Geoffrey.

the same reason.[35] Gildas similarly may be accepted at face value as a moralist, or presented as filled with the very spirit of intranecine spite he diagnoses in his countrymen.[36] The same considerations, with the addition of questions about avowedly literary material, govern disagreement about the other tranches of Arthurian material. Differences occur over the age of the bardic and triadic poems, but more importantly over whether they represent a Celtic tradition in which poets are bound to truth, their employers' vanity, or the "melancholy consolations of a vanquished race".[37] Similarly, interest in the medieval sources (which include the purported

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[35]Kemble, not believing in Arthur, reminds his readers that any ecclesiastic source, Bede included, would have been uninterested in pagan or British exploits. Ritson, on the other hand, believes him unreservedly (Ritson, op. cit., Preface).

[36]Turner is sceptical, Guest less so.

[37]There is a tradition that the bards were bound to "truth", alluded to by Morgan (see above), Jones, and in the cultural-religious historian Edward Davies', *Mythology and Rites of the Ancient Britons* (London, 1826), 27 - 84. Jones, who otherwise does not discuss his sources, roundly attacks the honesty of bards, whom he regards as lazybones, flatterers and inciters to intemperance (Jones, 221). Jones's anathema is partly directed against all poets (he mentions Pope, for instance) but especially against the tribal minstrel. Sharon Turner, on the other hand, supplements a consideration of the early sources with these Welsh traditions, all of which he uses as authentic. See also Turner's *Vindication of the Genuineness of the Ancient British Bards* (London, 1803). Herbert elaborates a fantastic theory in which these sources are allegories of druidic lore, at various removes from the sixth century (Herbert, i - xxxiii). (The bards are sixth century, the triads thirteenth, the *Mabinogion* meant to fascinate with hints of an esoteric religion.) Kemble has the phrase "the usual and melancholy consolations of the

exhumation of Arthur's body in the twelfth century from Glastonbury)[38] centres on the connection of the tradition to sixth-century events, if any, and the extent to which Geoffrey, as a Welshman, and a churchman during a particularly untruthful period for that institution, distorts and adds to the tradition.[39] Ritson extends this discussion almost to the creation of a fourth Arthur, arraigning centuries of partisan Welsh scholarship subsequent to Geoffrey for maintaining a false tradition out of wishfulness or pique.

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vanquished" for the Welsh tradition (Kemble, 18). Ritson trusts the Saints' lives, printing their Arthurian sections in an appendix, but regards the triads and bards as post-Galfridian and thus tainted by nationalist distortion (eg. Ritson, chapter 15, "Of Arthur's name").

[38]Ritson, again, has the most enjoyable sneers. Turner, to Buckle's commiserations, and Jones accept the burial as genuine (as indeed does Lingard).

[39] For only one writer (Morgan) are the exploits recorded in Geoffrey's *Historia* not misunderstood Breton legends, or downright inventions. Again, only he imagines that a sixth-century Celtic monarch established Chivalry in any form, let alone lock, stock and barrel. Ritson is especially righteous about this (eg. Ritson, xi - xxxvi). Herbert maintains that Geoffrey was fooled by a misunderstood allegorical tradition stemming from a conjectural seventh century history (Herbert, xxiv - xxv). The Holy Grail cycle passes off pagan ideas as Christian (Herbert, vi). Guest notes that Geoffrey "embellished without scruple" (Guest, 10), but trusts some non-Galfridian medieval allusions as connecting to the sixth century. Jones, while rejecting the Romance tradition for making Arthur the founder of chivalry gives the King a military career which is a toned down version of Geoffrey (Jones, 36 - 7).

Arthur, then, presents to the historians an unresolveable epistemological face. In their presentation, this condition is linked, via the intellectual and moral qualities of stupidity, cupidity or vicarious ambition, to past writers' national or vocational identities. Arthur and his court are shadowy figures, part fact, part fiction, with no sure line between. They have become so over centuries of representation, where the scrupulous work of scholar-priests, bards and antiquarians, and the interested work of monks, minstrels, and wistful Celts cannot be told apart.

It will be useful to ask one further question before moving to the understanding of Arthur in other discourses. Why are the characteristics I have just noticed — the hybrid epistemology of Arthurian discourse, its nationalist connotations — so problematic for historiography? After all, the mixture of poetic, propagandist and historic valences does not mean that it gives no information at all about the past. Information about culture, about social structure, values, and so on, is available.[40] What is difficult, however, is to ascertain from it the details, even the occurrence, of political and military events, or the extent — even existence — of various political entities. This is important because the historians I have considered are all committed to a view of history in which the political progress of nations is the grand end of historical knowledge. Other kinds of history are possible — histories of law,

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[40]William Barnes's primer, *Notes on Ancient Britain, and the Britons* (London, 1858), in Tennyson's library, is an example of this. Kemble's *The Saxons in England* performs the same function for the Anglo-Saxons, whose political history he believes is almost as impenetrable.

philosophy, and cultural institutions, for instance. To be useful, however, they must be plottable as or against political information (what Kemble and Turner do for Anglo-Saxon society in the works I have been citing). Political and military events, for these writers, are governed by social, religious and legal institutions: success or failure results from the identities forged in them. If one cannot establish what political and military events occurred, no lessons emerge from history about social organisation, constitutional practice and moral tactics. I shall be examining these assumptions in more detail in the next chapter. Here, it is only necessary to note that the historiographical scandal of Arthurian writing stems from this metahistorical bias. The interference between poetic values and empirical ones is problematic not in itself, but because it renders battles and reigns difficult to trace, thus nullifying the "Use of History".[41]

Arthurian Epistemology II: Literary History

Let me now turn to the literary history. I want to summarize five writers, all prominent figures in historiography, antiquarianism or the historiography of romance:

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[41]In Herbert's case, this imperative has been great enough to elaborate a fantastic theory of Arthurian sources as an allegory of a religion gaining political hegemony. Ritson, meanwhile, tries to clear the ground for this kind of history by wiping away error about Celtic political achievement. John Jones and Richard Morgan, on the other hand, weave their Arthurian narratives into histories of the Welsh people since 56 B.C., in which valued features of contemporary Imperial British society are traced to Celtic tribal practice.

Thomas Warton, J. C. Dunlop, Thomas Keightley, Thomas Wright and Henry Hallam. (Dunlop also provides a useful summary of a number of other eighteenth century literary historians). They are interesting from our point of view because they represent a markedly different bias concerning Arthurian writing. They discuss the matter in the context of establishing a history of the various elements which go to make up the chivalric romance which emerges in the twelfth century. One of these elements is the special "semi-historical" setting chivalric romance favours — the reigns of Charlemagne and Arthur.[42] All these writers concur in placing the Arthurian setting as an inheritance from Breton legend.[43] Warton, for instance, talks of "suppositious histories"; Dunlop of Welsh poetry as "a phantom of glory"; Wright of a "purely mythic" "national romance" comparable to the Anglo-Saxon story of

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[42]Classically, medieval romance has three "matieres", those of Britain (Arthur), France (Charlemagne) and classical Greece. The historians I am concerned with are not interested in the third of these matieres, for they wish to establish the specificity and originality of the genre of chivalric romance.

[43]Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology* (London 1828), discusses Arthurian fiction in his chapters of the "faery" of Brittany. See also Dunlop, *History of Fiction* (London, 1816), 167; Thomas Warton, "On the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe", *History of English Poetry*, 2nd edition, (London, 1775) (N.B. There are no page numbers given for either of the two introductory essays in this edition, which was the one Tennyson had); Wright, , *Essays on Subjects connected with the Literature, Popular superstitions, and History of England in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (London, 1846), I, 94 - 6; II, 45.

Beowulf.[44] None suggest that Arthur, like Charlemagne, may have been a real figure.[45]

Does this mean that Arthurian writing presents a different face to literary history than it does to a broader historiography — one in which Arthur is fiction pure and simple? In fact, in these texts Arthurianism marries poetry with history in two ways. Arthurian romance, which is these writers' sole concern, is understood as a specific innovation of the mid-to-late feudal age, a subset of chivalric romance. Its preoccupations and style are seen as a direct result of the age in which it was written. It is, in Wright's words, "a sort of mythic code ... of the more elevated principles and spirit ... which the high-minded knight was supposed to labour under".[46] More specifically, its setting, plot, atmosphere, ideology, and magical/supernatural narrative are all read as indices of racial and religious pollination. Each of these writers views chivalric romance as a marriage of various racially determined imaginative elements.

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[44]Warton, "On the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe", op. cit; J. C. Dunlop, op. cit., 188 - 89; Thomas Wright, *Essays etc.*, I, 96.

[45]In another essay ("On the Poetry of History") in his collection, however, Wright does talk of Arthur in the context of "popular tradition" attaching itself to historical figures, which "misrepresents the actions, but not the character of its hero" (II, 87 -88).

[46]Thomas Wright, Introduction to *Morte D'Arthur* (London, 1858), xvii. Cf. Thomas Warton, *History of English Fiction*, 109; Dunlop, 174 et. passim.

(Keightley adduces other reasons too.) Its magical preoccupations are Scandinavian or Arabian, as are its interest in giants and quests. Its ideology is Norman and French. Its religious fervour derives from the Crusades. These elements come together as a result of Europe-wide military and political events: wars against Islam in Spain and the Levant; migration and state-building by Norman Vikings.[47] The same causes operate with the Celtic setting of Arthurian romance. Here however, it is not simply a matter of continental religious identity and race, but of specific national circumstance. Arthurian story fits the needs of Anglo-Norman aristocracy in particular, being Christian and anti-English. The lucky match between the political story of Arthurian legend and the actual political conditions of Norman England (total English defeat) popularize a tradition which otherwise has no connection with the peoples of medieval Europe.[48]

Literary history sees in Arthur, then, similar traits to a broader historiography, but by a different route. It is a site in which authors and readers' cultural being demonstrably determines narrative. It is a site in which national identity in particular

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[47]For a discussion of the various racial origin theories of romance see Dunlop, 159 - 70. (Dunlop includes summaries of theories held by Joseph Ritson, John Leyden, M. Mallet, Dr. Percy and Thomas Warton.) See also Thomas Warton, "On the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe", *History of English Poetry* (London, 1775).

[48]Dunlop, 194 - 5; Warton, "On the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe", op. cit. ; Wright, *Essays etc.*, op. cit., 94-6.

influences story and actual political conditions mingle with fiction. In historiography these traits emerge because Arthurian writing represents a once potentially factual tradition, refracted into a state of fiction through a series of politically, religiously and vocationally distorting lenses. It is a matter of the mirrors of authorial patriotism, and of mimetic acts gone astray. With literary history Arthur and his knights are but one strand in a much wider field of racially determined imaginative achievement. History mingles with poetry not because reportage is invaded by fiction, but because the stories' treatment, and the reasons for their popularity, reflects medieval culture and the political exploits of the rulers of England. In both discourses, however, the play of cultural and national identity determines Arthurian writing as a blending of fiction with history in the specific nineteenth century sense. Invented narrative shimmers with the real doings of real men and women — unique, not representative events, preferably political and military. Similar traits and connections appear in the 1859 reviews. Once again, as the concerns of a literary review vary from the concerns of historians or literary historians, these traits reflect different priorities.

Arthurian Epistemology III: The 1859 Reviews

When Tennyson published the first four Idylls in 1859, critical response to the subject matter was predominantly enthusiastic. The Arthurian story was approved, where in 1842 it had not been. There were two reasons for this. Camelot adumbrated those burning issues, ordered government, national unity, domestic virtue and masculine identity. It also had enough mimetic gravity to give its characters

an idealised rather than invented humanity. Critics represented the corpus, on both grounds, as excellent material for national myth-making in the Victorian age. It was the second point, however, which they stressed when it came to commending the poetic potential of Arthurian materials *per se*.

Indeed, the understanding of Arthurian material in terms of its epistemological characteristics and the relation between them and poetry, is complex. The reviewers relate Tennyson's Arthurian material both to the sixth century Arthur of the historiographers and to the medieval romantic Arthur of the literary historians.[49] Their focus in both cases is on the epistemological tensions that emerge in the material, and what these tensions offer a modern poet. About half, for instance, acknowledge that there is a debate about the existence and achievement of the post-Roman Arthur.[50] They do so, however, not to enter the debate, or to question whether

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[49]In the context of late-twentieth century literary historiography, as Lee Ann Tobin points out, there are now three domains to consider: medieval Europe, nineteenth-century England, and the United States of America from the mid-twentieth century and later. (Lee Ann Tobin, *To Seek Another World: Arthurian Romance as Cultural Critique*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, DAI-A 52/06, p. 2155, Dec. 1991.)

[50]John Nichol, "Tennyson's Idylls of the King", *Westminster Review*, 72 (October 1859), 520-21, talks of the "vague traditions of a vanquished race", interwoven with "the religion and sentiments of a more refined era". "Idylls of the King", *Irish Quarterly Review*, 9 (October 1859), 836, mentions the "Ancient Britons", an "epitome of the ways and usages of a fabulously remote era", and "this strange jumble of undoubted fact and evident fiction, plain history and pure poetry". "Idylls of the King", *New Quarterly Review*, 8 (July 1859), 338, lauds *Idylls*'s type of poetry for "great actions and scenes

Tennyson's Arthur has a Celtic origin, but to establish that the medieval tradition Tennyson adapts is quasi-historiographical. Sliding out of any conclusive stance on the Celtic Arthur, they leave him as a tantalising potential hovering behind the mythos as a whole. Such a penumbra of conjectural history gives Arthurian subject matter the precise epistemological blend necessary for great Art. The same conclusion can be arrived at by considering Tennyson's romance sources as themselves historical products — fictions which are also records of medieval ideals and lifestyle. A number of critics (by no means all) present the sources as a gold-mine for modern poetry, because of their pre-mixing of past factual, and past poetical, values. A few critics reject the subject matter for exactly the same reason: its characters, plots and moral order are irredeemably "unnatural" to modern tastes. This too, of course, determines the suitability of Arthurian subject-matter on the grounds of its

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splendid with history" and notes the "semi-fabulous court of King Arthur" (338). Coventry Patmore, "Idylls of the King", *Edinburgh Review*, 110 (July 1859), 247, 263, more simply calls the tales "legends" of "chivalrous times" and "early Britain". William Gladstone, "Idylls of the King", *Quarterly Review*, 106 (October 1859), 469, says that Arthur is "we fear, wholly doubtful, though not impossible", but seeing the romance cycle as an idealisation of the life and times of the early middle ages commends Tennyson for not having projected characters and incidents "of his own in the region of illimitable fancy" but having absorbed "the spirit of the time, or the representation, with which he deals". Finally, Elisabeth Hassell, "Idylls of the King", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 86 (November 1859), 608, notes that the "shadowy exploits" of Arthur have no "*historical* foundation [sic]", so "antiquarians" question his existence, but roundly asserts faith in the King's reality because the tradition is so widespread. See also below, pp. 19, 21.

epistemological mix: it is not the past which is objected to, but the past seen through the lens of its own (historic) standards of art and behaviour.

Whether considering Arthur as a King or as a literary hero, the reviewers judge him as a space in which the kind of knowledge associated with history and the kind associated with poetry merge. This is not simply a matter of the epistemological traits of the source texts. It is not just that, as the historiographers lament, the exploits of a man who may have lived and fought have been elaborated into fiction. It is not just that, as the literary historians note, medieval romance is a product of its age. The existence of Arthurian legend as past story about past times (times past to the story tellers as well as to modern readers) raises very complex questions about the relation between poetry, reality, the past and the present. As a result, Arthurianism becomes epistemologically hybrid not just in itself, but in the modes of reading it demands. Arthurianism is a playground for tensions between two hermeneutic relationships: the relationship between a modern reader and a past world (fictive or real); the relationship between the world the reader acts in and the world of poetry (whether past, present or fantasized). The former historicist interpretative stance and the latter poeticist stance operate jointly in reading Arthurian materials — especially in reading a modern poem based on medieval Arthurian sources. It is this concern which makes the literary critical response to Arthur particularly interesting.

I propose to examine two reviews in some detail, which provide a representative example of the kind of arguments involved. These reviews

grapple with the epistemological dualism of Arthur both in his sixth-century and his romantic form. Both defend Arthurian writing as a topic for modern poetry, but do so via diverging emphases within a basically similar understanding of poetry. Both raise the issue of historicist as well as poetical modes of relating to the material; again, their emphases are slightly different, though the principles are similar.[51]

Hesitating between the idea that the Arthurian legends are "dimly associated with the historic muse of England" and that they are "beyond the region of authentic history", the *London Quarterly Review* declines any "dissertation on the origin of these fine legends".[52] Instead it focuses on the medieval romances' status as "the perfection of mythic history" (*LQR*, 1859, 64). "Mythic history" is a discourse "something between history and allegory" (*LQR*, 1859, 65). It involves "plot", "character and events" which are neither "hardened into a fact of history" nor of the poet's own "inventing", but which are "in a plastic condition" (*LQR*, 1859, 64). Now fictional, and irreducible to the status of a sequence of historical facts, mythic history

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[51]Previous scholarship concerning the reception of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* has not considered this specific topic. See E. F. Shannon, Jr., *Tennyson and the Reviewers* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1952), William E. Buckler, *Man and His Myths: Tennyson's Idylls of the King in Critical Context* (New York, New York University Press, 1984), J. P. Eggers, *King Arthur's Laureate: A Study of Tennyson's "Idylls"* (New York, New York University Press, 1971)

[52]"Idylls of the King", *London Quarterly Review* 13 (October 1859). Subsequent references to this text are in the text in the form (*LQR*, 1859, etc.).

in origin was not made-up: it is "incident which fiction early seized upon, and shaped and moulded to its own needs". Something with this kind of epistemological structure is "just the sort of material [the poet] requires" (*LQR*, 1859, 65). Allowing imaginative manoeuvre, it has the solidity and assurance of the real.

What is involved here is a conviction that great art can be didactic and binding by being mimetic. A poetic reading of the world is possible so long as what is represented derives from what is recognisably real, or potentially so. Art, that is, is already an arena in which the historical is mingled with something else. In this review, artistic creation, artistic representation, has two aspects, which correspond to two kinds of knowledge: fact and psychological and ethical generalisation. "Some incident" or "character" is "seen for a moment in its noblest attitude, and thenceforward transfigured by imagination into all that virtue or ambition would set before itself" (*LQR*, 1859, 65). Even the second movement, though imaginative, though taking representation out of the realm of factual accuracy, partakes of an admixture of reality to invention. "Characters and events" must be "mainly *typical*, or representative" [sic] (*LQR*, 1859, 64), but not by becoming "allegory". Representation becomes "representative" by fulfilling two requirements. It must not imitate the quotidian complexity of a *unique* "fact of history". On the other hand, it must model — or be comparable to — a world in which the reader understands he or she might act; thus it cannot be "allegory". The type, though in one respect the invention of moral imagination, is in another the generalisation of many things which

people do in the world poet and reader recognise as real (i.e. historical).

The *London Quarterly Review* recommends Arthurianism as "mythic history" because this epistemological structure meets the needs of good poetry. Both are discourses which involve, far in the background, events and characters which are assumed to have really existed. Both are discourses in which that factual base has been thoroughly transformed, so that while they are no longer reliable as records, they are reliable as idealised human types based in reality. This structure guarantees that the poet will capture "the sympathies and passions of mankind" and underwrites "the value of the lessons which [the poet] distils into our hearts" (*LQR*, 1859, 64). Because his "characters and events" are not tied to an alien reality, it is possible to feel for them. Because they are at once based in the real, but typical, the lessons they impart can safely be applied to the world one knows. What was a minefield for historiography has become a quarry for poetry.

This usefulness in terms of a poetic hermeneutics is neatly reversed when Arthurianism is considered, in the same review, in historicist terms, as a distinctively medieval version of "mythic history". Both in form and content its existence as a collection of romances — its historicity — make it "a species of poetic crux" even "Milton" could not solve. The difficulty is generic. Stories about Camelot cannot be connected with the development of the nation's "laws" or any "crisis in our history",

unlike stories about "the reign of Alfred" and "the death of Harold" (*LQR*, 1859, 64).[53] This both reflects and entails an absence of "epic pretensions" in the tradition as it stands, its reduction to "pretty fables" and short "moralities". At the same time, despite the presence in the Arthurian cycle of an embryonic typology of "Christian virtue", it remains a "crude mass". Written in "a lawless age", it has accrued too much of the "manners" of that age: "rapine, treachery, and licence" (*LQR*, 1859, 64 -66). Both of these characteristics bring into train a historicist relation between the poetry of the past and the poets and readers of the present. In relation to the high artistic and moral demands of the nineteenth century, they make Arthurian material appear of dubious value. Despite its existence as "mythic history", it remains a raw matter which must be re-poeticized if it is to become a modern poetry, rather than a historical relic.

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[53]There had been literary works with "epic pretensions" on these two figures in the previous two decades. Henry Taylor had published a longish tragic fragment, "The Eve of the Conquest" in 1848. Incompetent epics on Alfred by Joseph Cottle and John Fitchett were reviewed in the *Quarterly* in 1852. There was also Bulwer Lytton's novel *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings* (1848), which E. A. Freeman, later historiographer of the Conquest ranked with Scott. (See Whitwell Elwin, "Recent Epics", *Quarterly Review*, 90 [March 1852], 333 - 62; Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's, *The Eve of the Conquest and other Poems*", *Edinburgh Review*, [April 1849], 352 - 81; E. A. Freeman, *Thoughts on the Study of History, with reference to the propposed changes in the public examination* [Oxford and London, 1849], 12, fn..)

Among reviewers who use the *Idylls* as the basis for an extended consideration of poetics, both these positions are typical. Most approve Arthurian matter because it exemplifies the creation of a model world by editing the real rather than inventing anything. Most mark as potential trouble the inconsistencies and moral scandals of the tradition's medievalism. The *Westminster* is dissident in lamenting that mimetic skill has not been used on contemporary materials, and that Tennyson is not more historically accurate. The main line of divergence, however, is the poetics with which they approach this common assessment of Arthurian romance. Bagehot's article in the *National Review* is a good instance of this.

Like the *London Quarterly*, Bagehot alludes to the sixth-century Arthur only to establish the speculative nature of medieval discourse about him. "There is no evidence that such a king [as Arthur] ever existed; and the fact has very long been questioned." Yet, "the story of that monarch became *par excellence the* legend of chivalry" (sic).[54] In this condition, Arthurian story makes good raw material for a "prolonged" modern poem: "gold" buried in opprobrious organic matter (Bagehot, 1859, 374). Bagehot's reasoning turns on a similar tension between comprehensive knowledge of reality in all its messy uniqueness and knowledge of it in poetic experience that we saw in the *London Quarterly*. Like them, he assumes that great art

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[54]Walter Bagehot, "Idylls of the King", *National Review*, 9 (October 1859), 373. Subsequent references to this review will be in the text, in the form (Bagehot, 1859, pn.).

is mimetic, typological, and emotionally binding. Unlike them, however, he avoids attributing any directly didactic function to art. Poetry is valuable for its "accomplished exquisiteness" (Bagehot, 1859, 379) — in Bagehot's presentation an experience of charm at once fragile, purified, and exalted. Stories of modern life mitigate against "sustained and high poetry" of this sort (Bagehot, 1859, 376),[55] because they necessarily include recognisable "facts of life", whose "hundred associations" constitute an "unintended" but inevitably "disenchanting" metonymic chain (Bagehot, 1859, 376). (It is not that modern life is prosaic, just that more associations mean more chances to "jar upon" the "characteristic associations" of poetry.)[56] A "legendary history" of an "ancient king", on the other hand, avoids this. The "details" of milieu and social practice it must include are unfamiliar. They have few associations of any kind, and the poet may "select and ... exaggerate" among them without large discrepancy between poetry and what the reader knows as "fact of life" (Bagehot, 1859, 375). "Chivalrous romance" is doubly advantageous in this respect: it has already been "sifted by a sort of legendary tradition; by the testing imagination

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[55]This has for its context a debate about the kind of subject matter most pliable for poetry's agreed social function. See Jane McCusker, *Robert Browning and the Victorian Debate about the Proper Subject Matter for Poetry*, Univ. of Glasgow Unpublished PhD Thesis, 1982; DAI-A 49/02 p.259, Aug. 1988.

[56]Curiously anticipating Roman Jakobson, Bagehot instances the "modern novel" as the art form appropriate to metonymy. In it "copiousness" of detail and association becomes "defined abundance and ... measured fertility" (Bagehot, 1859, 376).

of ages of story-tellers and story-hearers" (Bagehot, 1859, 376). It has reduced medieval reality to a "falling in love period" and a "fighting period", a time of individual combat and love at first sight, alighting on those aspects of the middle ages most suitable to art without sacrificing verisimilitude by distorting it.[57] Arthurian legend is thus ripe for the modern poet. It represents a world improved for the purposes of art, an improvement balancing mimetic recognition and enchantment, rather than recognition and ideal. Viewed in terms of a poetic hermeneutics, that is, the hesitation in Arthurian story between history and fiction is entirely advantageous.

Again, however, there are caveats. Though containing "many elements of great artistic value", the romances, as actual medieval productions, are "dull and tedious" and cannot in themselves "again be popular" (Bagehot, 1859, 374). Their prettified version of life involves a repetitive "glare" of "extraordinary events" which "petrifies ... astonishes ... tires, and ... bores" in quick succession (Bagehot, 1859, 379). Arthurian romance, moreover, contains the "very delicate topic" of Guinevere — a "peculiar and painful" figure upon which "the imagination cannot rest with satisfaction" (Bagehot, 1859, 383 - 4). The historicist view of Arthurian story, in other words, makes it problematic. Both formally and in terms of its values, it is marked by the limitations of the past. As with the *London Quarterly*, the romance

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[57]Sex and violence are the "most interesting aspect" of "human nature" to "most people". Bagehot argues at some length that the social conditions of the middle ages meant that fighting and love really went on in the concentrated way that satisfies the demands of poetry (Bagehot, 1859, 375 - 8).

tradition itself therefore becomes a species of raw material which the modern poet must re-edit for modern readers. Of course, this can only be done on the same principles as any act of poeticization: it must judiciously select from what is already there. Tennyson must disperse the longeurs and "painful" aspects of the Arthurian tradition, but may not step outside the realm of the past to do so. He may tell the story of Guinevere and Lancelot by allusion not direct narrative (Bagehot, 1859, 381); suggest "artistic palliation" for the Queen;[58] and introduce, to "relieve" the sex, violence and adultery, representations of what are assumed to be other medieval identities.[59] He may not, however, contextualize Guinevere's conduct by representing in medieval society a "love-tinged intercourse" between men and women in general which medieval conditions did not sustain (Bagehot, 1859, 381). Interpretative anachronism — the re-vision of the past's nobility by the present's standards — is permissible. Mimetic anachronism — the addition to the past of modern characters — is not.

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[58]The "moral tact of making the Queen see Lancelot first" is "necessary as an artistic palliation": "It would have been scarcely pleasant to think of her without it" (Bagehot, 1859, 384). The shift of emphasis between the two reviews is well exemplified here.

[59]Earl Yniol and his wife, male and "feminine" versions of "The quiet contemplative character, which suffers so many calamities in rude times", are Bagehot's own examples (Bagehot, 1859, 379 - 80).

In the 1859 reviews, then, Arthurian narrative is mimetic, but it is a mimesis where ideals and historical realities jostle one another. The conflict is at once something germane to all art (art's transfigurative representation of the real) and specific to the peculiar achievement of medieval romance (a transfiguration of reality marred by bad artistic and moral models). In its relation to everyday medieval behaviour, romance reflects the imagination of its historical authors, but also their observation of the facts of medieval life. In its relation to heroism, however, it reflects the historical limitations of its authors. The world of Arthurian story is ideal in stitching the highlights of medieval existence into a seamless world of enchantment. It is historical in making choices which, in the light of five hundred years of change, appear gauche and incompetent. These factors together again show Victorian writers relating the epistemological duality of Arthurian discourse to the being of its authors, and to their national, vocational and cultural identity. In this case it is not a question of personal interests interfering with historical accuracy (as with the historiographers), or of racial conditions guiding imaginative characteristics (as with the literary historians). Instead, it is a matter of time and place determining the level of poetic achievement of the writing. The romances are both poetry and history because their authors are marked by the backwardness of their era and birthplace. By the same token, modern Arthurian story is both poetry and history because it is marked by the progressive standards of the England of the nineteenth century. As the *London Quarterly* put it, Tennyson's poem is not more beautiful than *Paradise Lost*, but does succeed in a task which Milton withdrew from, straining beauty from a more recalcitrant stock. It does so through a tact which is both Tennyson's

personally and the prerogative of his age.[60] Like his readership, like other contemporary poets, he understands that the bad morality and bad art of the past is bad, while seeing some good in it. As a genius, however, he has the positive counterpart of what remains a modern sensitivity: the ability to de-alloy the good and bad, and forge something newly, and more purely, beautiful.

Arthurian Epistemology IV: Chivalry as a Code of Manners

The final area I wish to consider in this chapter is a series of ideas about the code of chivalry itself. Here I am considering a new series of texts; or texts I have already cited on different subjects. They are historiographical and literary critical texts which deal in some detail with the question of chivalry as an historical code of

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[60]The *London Quarterly*, indeed, sees Tennyson in highly political terms, as if his kind of popularity represented the unison of bourgeois England. "Raised by deliberate choice of Majesty, his position is almost equally confirmed by critical avail and popular assent". (The political overtones are made clear in a previous remark that Tennyson has "the suffrages of all who rightly and scrupulously exercise the poetic franchise".) He has attained this position because his poetry can be read in terms of a Wordsworthian social project for aesthetics. Readers "repair ... to the poet's muse" for a particular purpose. They find reconciled there the activity of their own "kingly reason" uncovering "nature", and the values of "diviner tenderness", "justice, providence, and social virtue". The poet's interventions, in other words, provide a spectacle in which an increasing "sphere of truth" (all kinds of Science, that is: physical, psychological, social, etc.) can be known as lovable, felicitous, and a guarantee of morality and social stability.

manners. It should be emphasized that my interest here is not chivalry as a Victorian cult; it is chivalry as it was understood to have existed in the past. This is a fine distinction, to be sure. Nevertheless, it is important because it brings out an aspect of the Victorian understanding of chivalry which has not to my knowledge been commented on; which has certainly not been connected to Tennyson's work; and which adds another strand to the main contention of this chapter: that the subject of *Idylls of the King*, before Tennyson gets hold of it, is a site for questions of knowledge and power via being a site for questions of historical and poetic knowledge.

I have already cited Thomas Wright for the idea that Arthurian romance was supposed to represent a codification of chivalry. What I did not then point out was that Wright regards Arthurian romance as special in this respect. Other forms of medieval writing are simply mimetic; only Arthurian romance is a spectacle of the medieval ideal in itself.[61] Such views provide a good context for those 1859 reviews which push Arthurian romance for its poetic capacities (Wright's comments come at the end of the preface to his 1858 edition of the *Morte D'Arthur*). They also provide a good introduction to a little remarked upon detail of the Victorian cult of chivalry. This is the special relation that was understood to have existed between literature and chivalric ideas in the medieval period itself. It would not be fair to say that Chivalry

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[61]Thomas Wright, "Introduction", *Morte D'Arthur* (London, 1858), xvii. Cf. Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry*, 2nd edition (London, 1775), 109; 117.

is universally understood as a place where history and poetry get confused, as Arthurianism is. On the other hand, historiographers of chivalry regard its most important components in the Victorian imagination either as absolute fiction, or as cultural refinements that grew up in close, causal relation with the romance as a literary genre.

Chivalry could be regarded in one of two lights: a military-judicial light and a romantic-cultural one. The latter had to do with the growth of "female" influence: the increasing value given off the battlefield to literary accomplishments, good manners and luxurious display over mead and laddish jokes; and the institution of courtly love.[62] This was always assumed to have been a phenomenon partly inspired by literature.[63] The former included the practice of knight-errantry, and a conjectured code of rules for the conduct of war. Historians in general did not accept that knights rode hotfoot about the countryside performing deeds of prowess for a loved one. Some did accept that in a period of little central administration and therefore much injustice, knights could and did take it upon themselves to right a wrong. This

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[62]Sharon Turner, *History of England During the Middle Ages*, 3 vols. (London, 1814 - 23), 146 - 47; Henry Hallam, *View of the State of Europe During the Middle Ages*, 7th ed., 3 vols. (London, 1837), 487 - 88; Charles Mills, *The History of Chivalry, or Knighthood and its Times*, 2 vols. (London, 1825), I, chapter 1; 161 - 75. Thomas Warton, "Introduction", *The History of English Poetry*, 2nd. edition (London, 1775).

[63]Hallam, op. cit., 500 - 1; Mills, I, 42 - 3; 170. Warton, "Introduction", op. cit..

practice was encouraged and at the same time highly exaggerated in literature.[64] They also argued that knights preferred to fight each other in war rather than peasants, not to take unfair advantage of each other, and, once a battle was over, to treat each other as fellows. At least one historian whom Tennyson knew, however, flatly rejected all of this. Knights were small-scale farmers, not roving Quixotes; the code of chivalry was a literary conceit; all the advantages claimed for it regarding the conduct of war were false.[65] The chivalric idea results from "the witchery of verse": "an intoxicating incense-mist of sweet savour, wrapping the senses in delusion, concealing the frailties, the imperfections, nay even the deformities of the mortals before whom it ascends".

What emerges from this is the distinct sense that the historicity of chivalry was of the same kind as the historicity of Arthur: something disputed as a manual of actual behaviour, actual events; but accepted as a picture of fictional ideal, as the fantasy of the past. To be more precise: what these historians do is to suggest that, whatever contemporary feelings about chivalry were, as a question of knowledge it was ambiguous. I do not mean to suggest, in other words, that the vast mass of Victorian

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[64]Turner, I, 132 - 5; Mills, I, 10 - 11; Warton, "Introduction", op. cit.; David Hume, *History of England,* II, 99.

[65]Sir Francis Palgrave, *History of Normandy and England,* 4 vols. (London, 1854 - 55), 435 - 41; 500 - 3. See also Hallam, op. cit., 497: "knight errantry, ... as a profession, cannot ... be conceived to have had any existence beyond the precincts of romance".

bourgeois readers regarded chivalry as quite possibly a myth.[66] I do wish to suggest, however, that in specifically historiographical texts, chivalry emerges as an epistemologically ambiguous arena, just as Arthurian fiction does. The point is important, because it marks Tennyson's poem yet again as attacking a self-consciously 'semi' historical representation.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated that Arthurian literature, whether as historiography, romance, or a possible source of stories for modern poetry, was considered as an epistemologically hybrid discourse. In it, historical and poetical modes of knowledge merged or conflicted. This was a duality which brought into sharp relief the nature of the dealings between writer, object of knowledge and reader in both discourses. For the historian, the poetry of Arthurianism exposed the incompatibility between his aims and those of his sources, in such a way as to render an impressive modern historiography tantalising but impossible. For the critic, the history of Arthurianism exposed the incompatibility of modern and medieval taste, in such a way as to pose a massive difficulty for a poetics determined to assimilate all imaginative work to an idealising and consensualizing mimetic model. In both cases,

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[66]See Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981) for a study of the myriad ways in which the nineteenth century gave chivalry credence.

that is, the duality posed a resistance to the discursive projects of the nineteenth century writer and reader. In both cases this led to a condemnation of the other expressed as a belittling of the other's national, vocational and/or cultural identity. What also emerged, however, was a real difference between the ultimate response of the two discourses to the hybrid. The reaction of history was much more extreme and pessimistic than that of poetry. In the next two chapters I shall examine the discourses of historiography and poetics respectively, to understand why the resistance of Arthurian discourse to the nineteenth century's orders of knowledge should have provoked these different responses. What we shall see are two identities, constructed in the acts of historical knowledge and poetic knowledge respectively, and therefore at stake in the ambiguous epistemology of Arthurianism. As we shall also see, these identities constitute the self as subject and object of a disciplinary regime in Foucault's sense of the word. The problem of Arthurianism we have examined in this chapter will then emerge as a frame in which questions of knowledge and power might be self-consciously addressed. This in turn will provide a highly illuminating frame in which to examine Tennyson's Arthurian poem.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND DISCIPLINE

It is now clear that, during the century leading up to the composition of *Idylls of the King*, Arthurianism was a discursive site in which issues of literary invention, mimesis, and reading merged with issues of historical record, the purpose of historical narrative and historicist reading. In it, the modes of knowledge associated with history and poetry came into fruitful or destructive conflict. It is therefore necessary, if we are seeking to understand this discourse in its function as the governing epistemological structure of *Idylls of the King*, that we examine more closely what historical knowledge and poetic knowledge might have been for Tennyson and his generation. The present chapter examines the question of historical knowledge. It looks specifically at the work of the three most popular and intellectually influential historians of the first Victorian generation. In these texts, it focuses on the total network of relations between the subject of historical discourse, its epistemological object, the discursive representation of knowledge and the social function of historiography. I argue that this total network of relationships encompasses two distinct processes, both of which bear striking resemblance to those which obtain in

the disciplinary institution as described by Foucault. In the first process, the object of historiographical knowledge is also the object of historiographical power. The epistemology which governs this relation is that of a normalising and individualising surveillance, while the object itself is the administrative relation between institution and subject which discipline seeks to control. In the second process, the display of historiographical knowledge objectifies and permits the measurement and communication of a historiographical practice of the self. The display depends on a complex activity of surveillance, analysis and imagination which itself depends on a complex training of the subject of history in its relations to its own desires, to others, and to the society in which it lives. The display also communicates not only historiographical knowledge but the practice of the self which has effected that knowledge.

This relationship between early-mid Victorian historiography and disciplinary power-knowledge has not been noted before. However, since this chapter does not purport to be a total survey of historiographical writing in that period but an investigation into the discursive context of *Idylls of the King*, it is necessary to outline the scope of this claim very carefully. It must be situated in relation to the whole range of Victorian historiography, to Tennyson's historical interests, and to present-day scholarship both about history writing in the period and about the development of

modern power.[1] It is best to begin by stating the antecedents and the tradition of historiographical writing I focus on.

The present chapter concentrates on the three major historiographers of the first Victorian generation: Carlyle, Thomas Arnold and T. B. Macaulay. These writers, as Rosemary Jann has shown, were the most important figures in a mode of non-professional historiography which developed in the mid-1820s, at almost the same time that the first professional positions for historians were established in the Public Records Office. This mode amalgamates a number of prior historiographical traditions, under the immediate influence of the possibilities opened up by Scott's historical novels. It combines romantic historiography, interested in the past as an autonomous whole and in mass political and cultural change; Enlightenment historiography, committed to documentation and the evolution of systematic principles of historical causation; and "scientific" historiography, concerned with methodological rigour and suspension of judgement on the past. Especially through figures like Thomas Arnold, this mid-century mode exerted a direct influence on the development of academic history — which after the 1850s became the most important avenue for historical professionals and which from the 1860s challenged and then toppled this mode itself. It is differentiated from professional history, both in the university and in the bureaucracy, by its commitment to the general literary

[1] It should be noted in this regard that there is a great deal of writing in the periodical press which scholarship has not examined, and which suggests the existence of a less epistemologically differentiated notion of history than has hitherto been acknowledged as sociologically significant.

marketplace, rather than any specialist or institutional audience. It is differentiated from the antiquarian mode of historical study by its commitment to broad narrative sweep and the demonstration of abstract political or moral causal principles, rather than to local, adventitious or uncoordinated story. In other words, this mode at once values mimetic excitement and narrative unity, the imaginative re-creation of the past on the basis of rigourously established information, and the explanation of events not only in terms of their immediate but their general and comparative determinants.

I concentrate on this mode of historiography for a variety of reasons. First, it is the most sociologically significant of the modes of history available to Tennyson. Not only did it boast a readership in the mass literary market-place, it had the approval of practitioners in the academy and the PRO. Its reach surpassed the locally focused, amateur activity of the antiquarian and the emergent, academic specialism of archaeology. Second, because it stresses the excitement of historical narrative as well as factual accuracy and the rigour with which historians cull systematic truths from the past, it is the form of historiography most problematized by Arthurian discourse. The inviting mythical shape and frustrating empirical poverty of the corpus draw out its internal contradictions. Third, it is also the form of historiography which poses the most interesting challenge to Poetry as a socialising discourse. It claims all the penetration into the reader of poetry but with a more stringent standard of truth, and without any temptation to fantasy and self-indulgence. Finally, it is a form of historiography in whose components Tennyson had substantial personal and intellectual investments. Tennyson's poetry, it is true, does not aim for the reconstructive historiographical detail of Browning or of the Macaulay of the *Lays of*

Ancient Rome.[2] Nonetheless, the intellectual framework of historiography, as well as the information it provided, exercised Tennyson consistently throughout his life. Kozicki has plausibly identified an intellectual background for the total world-view of Tennyson's poetry in the Anglican historiography which mediated Niebuhrian history in the Cambridge of the 1820s.[3] The poet's notebooks confirm that this was not merely an interest in grand narratives, but in the technical issues of history — the hermeneutics of source-criticism and the use of significant detail in historical narrative.[4] Tennyson's library, records of his reading and personal acquaintance also confirm both his exposure to and interest in theories of legal-moral-institutional development and of catastrophic epochal change in the legal-moral-institutional framework.[5] He is aware, in other words, of the problematic of the administrative relationship between institutions and subjects which is the epistemological object of the historiographical mode we are interested in. *Idylls of the King* in fact focuses on

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[2] T. B. Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome* (London, 1842), Preface.

[3] Henry Kozicki, *Tennyson and Clio: History in the Major Poems* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1979), 14 - 24.

[4] Harvard MS ENG 952 (3), 1 - 4; MS ENG 952 (6), 1, 3 - 7; MS ENG 952 (8), 21 - 22 give Tennyson's own historical doodlings.

[5] Tennyson had most of Carlyle's works, and knew Kemble and Hallam snr. He also read Hegel (see Kozicki, op. cit., chapters seven and eight for a discussion of the Hegelian influence on *Idylls of the King*).

this relationship, to nineteenth century critical delight.[6] As a whole, in other words, the mode of historiography Jann represents as the dominant one at the time is apt for our purposes. It provides a significant insight into historical knowledge as it might have been understood by Tennyson and his readership, and therefore into the epistemological crux of Arthurian writing. [7]

What about the relationship to current scholarship of my claim that this historiography displays disciplinary traits? There have been a number of illuminating scholarly investigations of the epistemology of Victorian historiography, including one which engages with Foucault's earlier work on the nineteenth century episteme.[8]

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[6]See, e.g. Walter Bagehot, "Idylls of the King", op. cit., .

[7] It will be noted that I do not consider the influential historians of the latter half of the era, in particular Freeman and Greene. I have taken this route because the focus of the thesis is a poem by Tennyson published in the main between 1859 and 1875. I have concentrated, in other words, on texts which could have formed a context for that poem's composition, texts against which it might have been conceived. Freeman's and Greene's major works appeared too late to have affected the composition of the poem. Tennyson possessed their work, but in editions dating from the mid-eighteen-seventies.

[8] Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History* (Columbus, Ohio State UP, 1985); Haydon White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore, Baltimore UP, 1973); A. Dwight Culler, *The Victorian Mirror of History* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985).

Some discrete political traditions of history have also been explored.[9] There have been studies of the emergence of History as an academic discipline in the nineteenth-century.[10] However, there has been no comparison of the structure of power-knowledge in discipline and historiography in the middle fifty decades of the nineteenth century, or of the relation between those structures and the production of the historian as a practice of the self. Rosemary Jann, for instance, provides an excellent overview of the epistemological relationships within mid-century historiography. However, she does not consider the implications of historiography's epistemology whether in terms of micro-politics, ideology or identity. Phillipa Levine charts the sociology of the production of antiquarian, archaeological and historical knowledge and identity. However, she neither considers the possibility that the mode of knowledge of history is a version of surveillance, nor focuses on the epistemological relationships within the production and display of historical knowledge which produce historiographical identity. The subject is a significant one, however, and not just for an understanding of *Idylls of the King*. The link between the teaching of history and the formation of "statesmen" is a well established topic of mid-century polemics about the place of History in higher education. While part of that polemic link was the idea that history taught specific lessons about how to handle

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[9] J. M. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981); Sir Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London, Bell and Sons, 1931).

[10] Phillipa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archeologists in Victorian Britain 1838 - 86* (Cambridge, CUP, 1986).

political situations, just as important was the idea that learning the discipline of historiography showed potential leaders how to objectify past and present situations so as to administer the present. It is not merely that contingent political principles were rationalised by making up stories about the past, but that — as in the case of the mode of knowledge turned on Oriental cultures — the mode of knowledge itself was held to form the mind of the statesman, morally and hermeneutically.[11] It is therefore significant that the mode of knowledge and the production of the historiographical mind is compatible with disciplinary structures and techniques. It indicates a micro-political as well as macro-political aspect to history's social function — a way in which it works not just to justify a particular ideology, but to anchor an identity in such a way that it appears based in the use of a technique beneath ideological disagreement.

It is worth pointing out, in this regard, that historiography also bears a close relationship to a slightly different development of the "disciplinary" element of modern power. The administrative relation which is the object of the dominant historiography — its wide notion of what responds to administration and the organicist sociology which accompanies it — make historical knowledge an adjunct to what Foucault calls bio-power.[12] Bio-power takes as its focus the population of a

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[11] See Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin Edition (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1985)

[12] This has not, to my knowledge, been pointed out before. Foucault treats nineteenth century historiography in *The Order of Things*, but in terms of its splitting into a mode of knowledge which underlies the episteme of the whole period and a specific discursive genre. He does not observe there or subsequently the relation between history and the modern state. Phillipa Levine, *The Amateur and*

nation and its conditions of productivity. Foucault's own interests led him to concentrate on the "noso-politics" of bio-power (interest in the level of health of the population, birth and death rates, hygiene and so on). He notes, however, that there are many other aspects of this kind of power-knowledge, including the development of economics, and the interest in "moral" statistics. The eighteenth-century German 'Polizeiwissenschaft', for instance, an early instance of bio-power, gathers knowledge on a nation's economic, familial, religious and infra-structural relations among others. It does so to intervene in these relations; the overall purpose being to increase the productivity and well-being of the whole population.[13] The historiographical focus I shall be considering corresponds with such a project. Macaulay, for instance, begins his examination of the "State of England in 1685" by remarking on how important information about the size of the population is to historical analysis.[14] The general

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the Professional shows that the first professional historians were direct employees of the State, working in the embryonic PRO from the 1810s. She also, however, does not observe the specific connection between history as a mode of knowledge and bio-power. Jann, on whose summaries of the development of history after the 1880s I have relied here, does not discuss power-knowledge at all.

[13]See Michel Foucault, "The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century" and "The History of Sexuality", in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972 - 77*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans., Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper (New York, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), pp. 166-93.

[14]"One of the first objects of an inquirer, who wishes to form a correct notion of the state of a community at a given time, must be to ascertain of how many persons that community then consisted." *History of England*, op. cit., i, 219. Thomas Buckle, whom I mentioned in respect to Arthurian

aim of history — to inform potential political agents about the conditions of national and moral improvement — directly considers conditions which affect the whole population, and specifically rejects a view of the past which concentrates only on individuals or the upper-classes. In our period, historians of less synthetic ambition (Hallam, Turner, Kemble, for instance) commend their historiography in similar terms. It gives citizens information which might show them what constitutional and economic policies to support, by showing how these policies affected the nation in the past.[15] Indeed, it is precisely provision of this kind of information about population (the effects of institutions of all kinds on individual, moral and material prosperity) which enables history to become established as an examinable university subject towards the end of our period. It this which makes it a school of "statecraft", an acceptable training for imperial bureaucrats.[16] While it is not my purpose to examine this relationship, it is worth pointing out that historiography is therefore doubly involved in the micro-politics of modern power. Not only is it based on the

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historiography in the last chapter, similarly calls for statistical analysis, over a wide field, of population.

[15]See, for instance, the prefaces to Kemble, *The Saxons in England* (London, 1849), Sharon Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons* 3rd ed., 3 vols. (London, 1820), Sharon Turner, *History of England during the Middle Ages* (London, 1814 - 23), Henry Hallam, *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, 7th ed., 3 vols. (London, 1837).

[16]Insofar as these notions became absorbed into the teaching of history to undergraduates, even after a research-oriented programme came to dominate professional history, this direct connection of historical knowledge with bio-power continued well into the twentieth century. See Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History*, 215 - 33.

disciplinary forms of normalising and individualising knowledge, but it is the normalising and individualising knowledge which takes bio-power as its object.

Having noted these implications of the claims of the present chapter, it must be stressed that my object is not to establish them for all historiography in the period. I will only examine a limited number of representative texts, linked to Tennyson's own knowledge of historiography. Moreover, my object is not only to show that the epistemological relations in the chosen texts are disciplinary in form, but also to examine the practice of the self in which those relations participate. This is because historiography provides two things which are important for a study of *Idylls of the King*. On the one hand, it models a possible epistemological structure for texts whose object is a past society. In other words, it identifies one component of the poem's overall epistemological architecture as an instance of Arthurian discourse. However, it also models the production of identity in certain linked processes in a way which is investigated closely in the narratives and characters of the poem. Historiographers require and acquire a particular practice of the self as the condition and the product of historiographical practice. This derives from the practices of isolating and processing information about the past so that it conforms to the requirements of historiography, and also from the practices of displaying that information in a digest form which meets the special communication requirements of historical narrative. In other words, the identity of the subject of historiography is forged specifically in the circuit of epistemological and communicative practice. It is precisely such a basis for the practice of the self on which *Idylls of the King* focuses. In addition, the particular mutation of surveillance which historiography adopts as a result of the conditions of

its object and of its expression is the same as the one *Idylls* focuses on. Both in the poem and in historiography, the subject both wields, is formed by and is judged upon the particularity of a discontinuous but never abated surveillance which requires the subject's own input to form knowledge at all.

Since discussion of knowledge and social purpose in the chosen texts is a complex matter, it will be helpful to begin with some indication of the main issues and lines of division among them. Knowledge generally appears in these texts under one of four major thematic oppositions: factually vs. non-factually based knowledge; knowledge of causes or patterns (mediate and final) vs. simple cataloguing; knowledge of alien modes of life vs. knowledge which is mere self-projection; and imaginatively valuable vs. merely abstract or sentimental knowledge. Historiography is defined as the combination of each of the first elements in these four oppositions. Each opposition therefore raises its own dangers for and scepticism about the possibility of historical knowledge. These dangers and scepticisms revolve respectively around the problems of sources, the historian's own biases, loss of moral identity and the possibility of an adequate balance between the poetic and the acute. It is in the historian's attempt to resolve these problems that a distinctive historiographical practice of the self is born, at the same time as a distinctive mode of knowledge. Both the mode of knowledge and the practice of the self fade on one side into antiquarianism (or archaeology)[17], and on the other into a kind of historicist

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[17]Phillipa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, op. cit. fleshes out the distinction between archeology, history and antiquarianism as social and epistemological formations. It is worth pointing out, however, that in my period the division between antiquarianism and archeology especially was

poetry or romance. The difficulties which discussions of these oppositions set out themselves revolve around two separate relations between the subject and the object of historiography. These are both power-knowledge relations in Foucault's sense, and concern the relation between the present which knows and the past which is known, the historian who claims to know and the reader who knows a little and demands to be better informed. The present chapter examines both these relations, beginning with the relation between the past and the present.

Let us take first some questions which arise from the poetic valence of historiography. The major historians of the day all draw a line between their discourse and poetry, because their narratives must conform to fact. This by no means suggests a rejection of the mode of literary effect. Quite the contrary: even those historians who do not chose the form of "circumstantial" narrative acknowledge that the best historiography is in this form. It is simply that in historiographical narrative every event, character, character trait and detail should have a reliable basis in some historical document. Even before Macaulay uses him to illustrate the shortfalls of a purely intellectual historiography, for instance, Henry Hallam apologizes for the truncated utility of his discourse.[18] "The beauty as well as the usefulness of a regular history", he says, "mainly depends" on "circumstantial delineation", which he cannot

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still vague and indeterminate. The distillation of the latter mode as the study of the past via artefacts rather than texts — one allied to anthropology and scientific, rather than literary, investigation — was beginning but not complete.

[18]Henry Hallam, *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, op. cit., (vii).

provide. Also like Macaulay, Sir Francis Palgrave rejects the option of dividing a History of the Middle Ages into informative volumes and historical novels. Sugaring actual occurrences with the pill of fictive ones confuses the line between the real and invented: readers cannot tell which is which, so they believe only what they want to, and cannot learn. What the historian should do instead is weave a poetically impactful narrative out of nothing but what is demonstrable.[19] "Let any one bethink him how impressive the smallest historical *fact* may become, as contrasted with the grandest *fictitious event*", says Carlyle: "chiefly by working more and more on reality, and evolving more and more wisely *its* inexhaustible meanings ... will [Poetry] be accomplished."[20] That narrative improves when it works wholly with fact is also the burden of Arnold's decision to include Roman legends in the *History of Rome*, but to divide them off from his main narrative by a less serious style of writing. Macaulay best summarizes the programme — one finely carried out in the *History of England* nearly thirty years later. "The perfect historian" is one who:

> relates no fact, ... attributes no expression to his characters, which is not authenticated by sufficient testimony. But by judicious selection, rejection and

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[19]*The History of Normandy and of England* (London, 1854), 4 vols., I, Introduction. Cf. Macaulay, "Hallam", 2.

[20]Carlyle, "Biography", *Fraser's Magazine*, 27 (April 1832), 257; see also "Boswell's Life of Johnson", *Fraser's Magazine*, 28 (May 1832), 386-7.

> arrangement, he gives to truth those attractions which have been usurped by fiction.[21]

Fact is a crucial differential of history, but on its own it does not form a particularly useful mode of knowledge. It is a necessary guarantee of truth, but by no means a sufficient one. "A history in which every particular incident may be true may on the whole be false."[22] I shall advert to the problems of establishing what actually is "fact" — the question of sources — later in the chapter. At this stage, however, let us simply note that it is not just all and every fact which gives historiography its special value, and not even the judiciously chosen fact if this is divided from its proper, involving interpretation. Rather, facts must be organised and chosen among so as to build up an exciting or beautiful narrative.

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[21]T. B. Macaulay, "History", *Edinburgh Review*, 47 (May 1828), 364.

[22]Macaulay, "History", 362. As Jann and Levine note, it was the antiquarian who was associated with knowing the past as a disjointed rummage of facts. Thomas Wright, himself a confirmed antiquarian, claimed that his division of historical labour was a "science" which existed to correct and authenticate historiography: "To bring [the historian's] means together, and to arrange and make them intelligible, has been the work of the English historical antiquary for the last three centuries", "Antiquarianism in England", *Edinburgh Review*, 86 (October 1847), 308. Levine, whose study of the antiquarian and historical discursive formations is the most thorough to date, rejects the idea that the simple identification of the antiquary with the jumble of facts is an adequate definition of this genre. It is, nonetheless, a significant point of comparison for all three of the historians I focus on here. (Phillipa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, 74).

This is not the only aspect to these historiographers insistence that their discourse regain "those attractions which have been usurped by fiction". For these writers, the kind of impact historiography seeks does not depend merely on rhetorical genius, but is a function of using "facts" to tell the story of a very specific kind of object of knowledge. In the 1820s and early 1830s, Carlyle, Arnold and Macaulay each propose a re-centring of historical narrative so that it may attain interest and excitement — a re-centring which in varying degrees governs their historiographical practice over the subsequent three decades.[23] Each takes issue at once with the narrow executive and legislative focus of traditional narrative history and the inadequate epistemology this focus entails. Each proposes that historians make visible not only the actions of kings and ministries but (in Macaulay's words) "ordinary men ... in their ordinary business and in their ordinary pleasures".[24] This entails that the epistemological object of history become the relationship between subjectivity and its collective or institutional conditions. The story of this relationship is what makes historiography engage and inspire its readership. Furthermore, for each of these historians, the specific aim of such a discourse is to spur readers toward an engagement in the contemporary episode of that story. Historiography encourages and guides readers in shaping their country's institutional and moral development. In other words, these writers seek a transformation in history's sociological focus as part of a programme not only to change the way historical knowledge affects readers but

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[23]See Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History* for treatments of the relation between historiographical theory and practice.

[24]Thomas B. Macaulay, "History", 364.

also to change the object of that sociological focus itself. What emerges from the demand that historiography be a poetically valent discourse, then, is a process in which historiography's object of knowledge and its object of power are identical. Put another way, what emerges from historiography's imaginative impact is an elementary surveillance of the relationship between subjectivity and institutions.

Let us begin with the first stage in that process: the identification of a specific object of knowledge for historiography. Macaulay and Carlyle articulate this in almost identical phrases. To know the past properly historians must leave "public buildings, public men, and public ceremonies" or "the Court, the Senate and the Battlefield" and explore "the exchange and the coffee house ... the convivial table and the domestic hearth"[25] or "the Temple, the Workshop and Social hearth".[26] Despite the obvious class-interests (the new sites of historical knowledge are largely sites where the middle classes might congregate) neither writer is interested merely in who is the object of historiography. In fact, the transformation they recommend involves a deeper existential penetration of its object rather more than it does a widening of the number of objects. History is required to make visible in the Reformation, for instance, "Scotland convulsed, fermenting, struggling to body itself forth anew", not "a really most dainty little Scandalous Chronicle ... of ... Mary Stuart, a beauty, but over lightheaded; and Henry Darnley, a Booby who had fine legs". The problem is not, as one might expect from the idealist analysis of "collective being" in

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[25]Thomas B. Macaulay, "History", 364.

[26]Carlyle, "Boswell's Life of Johnson", 388-9.

"Characteristics", that this gives an inadequate exposition of the condition of a society in its organic unity.[27] Rather, Carlyle is urging historiography to illuminate the interiority of the subject in a period of wide-ranging social change and conflict: "what men did, thought, suffered, enjoyed; the form, especially the spirit, of their terrestrial existence, its outward environment, its inward principle".[28] Macaulay makes substantially the same points about the same era, though the immediate stalking horse is an intellectual rather than sensationalist reduction of history. Historians should exhibit in the Reformation:

> not merely a schism which changed the ecclesiastical constitution of England and the mutual relations of the European powers, but a moral war which raged in every family, which set the father against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother.[29]

History, in other words, ought to set before the reader's "imagination" more than the institutional, ideological and military structures which determine human subjects. Knowledge of the "flesh and blood" feel of their particular subjectivities is also required. For both historians this means that the object of historiography is the relationship between subjectivity and its determinants: neither alone is sufficient; the study of their mutual interaction, their impact one upon the other, is paramount.

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[27]Carlyle, "Characteristics", *Edinburgh Review*, 54 (December 1831), 359-63.

[28]"Boswell's Life of Johnson", 388.

[29]Macaulay, "History", 366.

It might appear that the articulation of this relationship stresses the flow of power from one element (the collective) to the other (the subject). It might be suggested, in other words, that power, not relationship, is the object of historiography; that this was always the case; and that the only thing which changes in these historians is the understanding of power. If this was so, the proposed transformation in historiography could be seen simply as reflecting the development of the modes of power of the modern state. After all, to shift from the spectacular actions of sovereign governments to the day to day experience of individuals recalls the shift in techniques of power Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish*. The "disciplines" grow up as power begins to require not merely a few extravagant and theatrical interventions on the body of its subjects, but a subtle, assiduous and minute adjustment of their momentary actions and individual movements.[30] What both writers dream in a history of the Reformation reflects this, in that their interest is not really everyday experience *per se*, but the impingements of great historical movements on consciousness. They focus on how the institutional and ideological battles of religion entered the embodied experience of individuals, not on any more mundane aspects of that experience. Power and its conflicts are still the object of historical knowledge, that is, just as they were in the older historiography, but power is seen in a new light. It is something which is a constant presence in the life of the folk, something whose norms have been interiorized by the *Volk*. However, it would be premature to suggest this is all that happens in these texts. Not one of these writers justifies the expanded

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[30]See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1991), 3-104.

scope for historical knowledge primarily in terms of what is to be made known. The focus, rather, is how historical knowledge is to be broadcast. Their concern, in other words, is not the object of the knowledge-relation on its own, but the mode of that relation and its collateral effect on the reader. What exercises them is the need to make historiography a nervously impressive discourse, one whose pedagogic influence is not confined merely to what Carlyle, in a slightly different context, calls "the outworks of the man, ... the mere argumentative region of him".[31] This is necessary because historians want their discourse not simply to be informative, but to stir readers into action which affects that particular course of events whose past historiography describes. For this reason the object of history is more aptly described as the relationship between subjectivity and its institutional determinants. Historians look at the interchange between these elements not to consign subjects to passivity, but to influence and control both in their relatedness as a whole.

Macaulay makes this point quite directly. Having evoked, in "History", the scope of the projected historiography, he commends before all else the mode of "instruction" that may henceforth be "derived from history". The new history "would be of a vivid and practical character ... received by the imagination as well as by the reason ... not merely traced on the mind, but branded into it".[32] The deployment of

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31 Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History,* ed. Carl Niemeyer (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 2. Subsequent references will be in the form *On Heroes etc.*.

32 "History", 367.

"ordinary" experience of life in the past is, in other words, an instrument of history's motivational aims. It goes with the rhetorical skills Macaulay associates with "historical romances", and which preclude "beings" of the past existing in the mind only as "personified qualities in an allegory" — as mere signs of "general truths", rather than "vivid representation" which "impresses" these truths on the memory.[33] Moreover, "an intimate knowledge of the domestic history of nations is ... absolutely necessary to the prognosis of political events." The details of "moral changes ... which have gradually passed on the mass of the community" are in fact the signs of "revolutions" in the relation between institutions and subjectivity. They are like "symptoms attendant on the early stage" which allow a doctor to understand the "disease" before "the patient is beyond the reach of remedies".[34] In other words, they directly contribute to allowing the reader to predict and intervene effectively in the continuous process of change. Via the reader, then, Macaulay's historiography is a discourse in which the object of knowledge and the object of power are identical.

Carlyle's reasoning on this point is more involved. His objective is for historiography to be the kind of discourse he spent his whole career pursuing: a "Word" whose "inscrutable power" would cause a reader to be so "rapt away" as to declare that word "sacred, prophetic" and to order his/her life by it.[35] To become a power-knowledge like this historiography must conform to a particular mode, also

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[33] "Hallam", 1 - 2.

[34] "History", 367.

[35] "Biography", 257.

found in poetry, biography and religious discourse, whose mark is the satisfaction of readers in their struggle with the "Problem of Existence". Since this "Problem" is the antagonism between "human Free Will" (or "ethereal god-given Force [which is the] Self") and "material Necessity" (or "the heavy and unmanageable Environment"), this mode will always be some variant of biography.[36] The latter, after all, provides a direct image of individual agonism.[37] Historiography, therefore, as it describes the result of myriad lives, is for Carlyle "the essence of innumerable biographies", demonstrating "how men lived and had their being".[38] This means that historiography must imagine the past as an environment which conditions human subjectivity. It must simultaneously underline the transcendence of the soul, the weight of what surrounds and impedes it, and the reality of both. Epitome biography like this is at once "scientific" information (facts about how others have solved the "Problem of Existence") and "poetic" experience. It "calls the Sympathy of mortal hearts into action"[39] and continues long afterwards to affect inner being, remaining

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[36]"Biography", 253, 258.

[37]This biographical focus leaves its prints over all of Carlyle's works. The great majority of his historiographical enterprises are in fact biographies (*Past and Present, Frederick the Great, The Letters of Oliver Cromwell*). Biographical criteria govern his literary criticism and inspirational writing too (see, e.g., "Burns", "Corn Law Rhymes", *On Heroes etc.*).

[38]"Boswell's Life of Johnson", 388-9.

[39]"Biography", 253.

"indelible and magically bright ... in our remembrance"[40] because it has a suggestive "Infinitude of significance".[41] It is to accomplish this involving vision of human souls in tension with their environment that one avoids "Journal of Fashion" history or "cause-and-effect" speculation and focuses instead on the ordinary conditions of life in the past.[42] Only the latter turns historical knowledge into a contemplation of the myriad hero-isms of human existence, and historiography into a prophetic text by which readers can order their lives.[43]

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[40]"Biography", 258.

[41]"Boswell's Life of Johnson", 387; see also "Biography", 259.

[42]The former is what Carlyle compares the "dainty little Scandalous Chronicle" of Mary and Darnley to. The latter refers to the epistemological style of some contemporary historiography; it "accounts" for things, reducing human subjectivity to a cipher of social forces (*On Heroes etc.*, 12), and reality to "an algebraic symbol and given value", without mystery — and therefore without emotional bite ("Thoughts On History", 416).

[43]"Biography", 258. Once it has become so, Carlyle may even suggest that history has a head start on any other genre, since the "Time element" which frames historical knowledge bestows unasked on the past's everyday life that very "infinitude" of meaning which other Artists must strive to give their representations ("Boswell's Life of Johnson", 387). The actual rhetorical and cognitive process Carlyle envisages is interesting. He does not privilege conventional linear narrative, as is shown by his theoretical preference for narration by significant episode (Life of Schiller, 95 - 6; cited, Rosemary Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History*, 52) and even a cursory glance at *The French Revolution*. "Biography" instances Carlyle's response to an "insignificant passage" in Clarendon to illustrate how the quotidian fact grounds existential vision and the reader's experience of inspiration. The moment is a complex one. Fragmentary factual records are treated as 'poetic' details, the basis of

Arnold needs to be considered separately from either Carlyle or Macaulay, since in many respects his understanding of the relation between the inspiriting and the informative in good historiography differs from theirs. Like Macaulay, he distinguishes between historical "dissertations" and historical "narrative", and regards the digesting of the knowledge contained in the former by the latter as an essential part of any historian's task.[44] Unlike either Macaulay or Carlyle, however, he does not push the literary and poetic elements of historiography as part of historical knowledge itself. For instance, the very same "full and distinct impression of the events, characters, institutions, manners and ways of thinking" of an era that Macaulay celebrates both as rhetoric and ground of historical knowledge is for Arnold "antiquarianism" rather than "true historical knowledge".[45] Similarly, though Arnold commends the "picturesque and poetical character ... beauty ... and ... magnificence" of military events and of geography, these have for him an adventitious relation to the great aims of historical knowledge and even to the informative aspect of history *per se*. However, this does not mean either that Arnold rejects the object of knowledge isolated in Macaulay and Carlyle, or that he has a different notion of historiography's

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an imagined re-creation of a whole lifestyle. Conviction at once that the records commemorate facts and that their fragmentary status is the crudescence of an irrevocably lost plenitude of past existence give this vision the weight of reality and an unencompassable "infinitude" of significance.

[44] *History of Rome*, Introduction, vii - viii.

[45] *Introductory Lectures on Modern History*, 107. Macaulay, ("History", 367) notes that penetration to what Arnold is calling the "manners and ways of thinking" is "absolutely necessary to the prognosis of political events".

aims. On the contrary, the "telos" of historical enquiry, for him, is the same as theirs: the study of "that which touches the *inner* life of civilised man, namely, the vicissitudes of *institutions*, social, political, and religious" [my emphases].[46] He also insists that historiography should be more than a "record of facts", affecting "the imagination" as well as "the judgement [and] powers of reasoning".[47] Moreover, he connects this historical knowledge with a supra-rational ethical manipulation of the subject which leads to a transformation both of "inner life" and "institutions". In other words, Arnold re-orients historical study from the merely military and political towards an investigation of the myriad conditions of mass human subjectivity in just the same way that Carlyle and Macaulay do, and to further the same discursive ambition. As we have seen, he regards the aim of history as the revelation of everything that affects the "inner life of civilised man". This means examining what Arnold calls the "internal life" of nations as they affect the moral being of their subjects — their political, legal, judiciary and property structures, forms of religion and education, "science, art and literature".[48] Two consequences flow from this. One is that history becomes immediately and practically useful to the statesman. The other is for history to project a theory of civilisation based on faith in the freedom of the human subject and the need to give such subjects proper ethical conditions: a theory

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[46] *Introductory Lectures on Modern History*, 157 - 58.

[47] ibid., 2. Arnold, as one might expect given his strictures on antiquarianism, does not think a mere "record of facts" gives food for the intellect either.

[48] ibid., 17 - 26. Arnold discusses at length the moral effects of sitting in judgement and owning property.

which turns universal history into a compelling incentive to act. It provides an existential vision very much in Carlyle's vein, in other words, though attached to an institutional focus Carlyle would have regarded as mechanical.[49] At the same time, it "impresses the mind with an imagination" that "our existing nations are the last reserve of the world" and that "God's work on earth will be left undone if they do not do it".[50] As such, it inspires a sense at once of the urgency of political action, guarded confidence that action can be taken and taken successfully, and knowledge which guides that action down a certain path. The vision of universal history thus becomes a power-knowledge of the disciplinary type, one in which the object of knowledge and the object of power are identical.

History and Administration

The poetic realisation of facts about the past does not exhaust the definition of historical knowledge in this mode, nor does the requirement to prompt the reader to manipulate history's object of knowledge exhaust its disciplinary resonances. In all of these writers, the inspiring presentation of facts accompanies a quite different patterning — a more abstract, analytical patterning for which linear narrative is inessential.[51] The extension of historical focus from the government to the people

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[49]See, e.g., Carlyle, *Past and Present*, 2nd ed. (London, 1843), 110-2.

[50]*Introductory Lectures on Modern History*, 39.

[51]Both Macaulay and Arnold talk of the "dissertation" as the mode in which the lessons of history are abstractly debated. Carlyle's model of historical causality in any case excludes linear narrative.

contributes to this patterning. Put crudely, history shows why things happened as well as the events themselves. In doing so, it reveals patterns of change at the sociological level which may be taught as lessons of political behaviour in its broadest sense. It is these lessons which are to guide readers as they act upon the relationship between subjects and institutions. For each writer this involves imagining societies as collective entities, competing with their neighbours, or their predecessors and successors. Studying these collectives, they focus on the reciprocal interaction between institutional change, the ethical changes these promote and the level of success they sustain in competitive struggle. Each extracts from these studies nostra or principles concerning the institutional and administrative path a society must follow if it is to survive and prosper as an entity and boost the well-being of its inhabitants. This second set of parameters on the relationship between the subject of history and its epistemological object is what gives concrete direction to the historian's aim of changing history's future. What I want to show now is that these parameters entail an individualising and normalising surveillance of the object of history. This occurs in two ways. For all of these writers, the interplay of structures and subjectivity, institutional and ethical change, is revealed uniquely in each society and era. Nonetheless, this uniqueness is only realised by virtue of the society's relation to an external standard: a definition of success which is not necessarily the society's own and which *is* explicitly geared to the prognostic and administrative questions which exercise the present. Second, historians indulge in a catholicity with respect to documentary sources which is nevertheless governed by what was powerful in the past or what of it is still significant in the present. Knowledge of the past which cannot be focussed in this way is either jettisoned, doubted, or regarded as virtually

unobtainable. Again, what can be known of the past is determined by a norm of success dictated by posterity. This means that historiography can be properly said to be a disciplinary knowledge of the past. Not only is it one in which the object of knowledge and the object of power are identical, it is one in which the subject relates to the object by way of an individualising and normalising surveillance.

It will be convenient, this time, to consider Carlyle separately from Macaulay and Arnold, since his understanding of history as an administrative school is significantly less positive than theirs. Both Macaulay and Arnold insist that historical knowledge consists not in mere knowledge of "facts", but facts sofaras "abstract truth ... interpenetrates them"[52] or as evidence of "general patterns".[53] These truths and patterns are the elements of a "political science". Arnold develops this science most extensively in the *Introductory Lectures* of 1841 - 2. It involves a focus on the past as it has been affected by administration, which in turn entails an organicist sociology, and a notion of government which extends into the inner life of a state's subjects. In the first lecture, Arnold takes as his governing metaphor the idea that historiography is the "biography" of a "society" — especially of "political society", namely the "state or ... nation". Two consequences flow from this idea. As with the life-story of an individual, the life-story of a nation takes the whole being of its subject under consideration, the vicissitudes of its relations with others and its environment, but also, as their determinant, the vicissitudes of its inner life. At the same time, as with

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[52] Macaulay, "History", 340.

[53] Cited in Jann, *The Art and Science of Victorian History*, 4 - 6.

an individual, one can make a distinction between the "head" and the body of the organism — its "common life" and what directs that life. What does this mean for historiography? For Arnold, the "common life" of a social being is "brought to a head ... and exhibited intelligibly and visibly in the government". This does not mean that the "biography" of a nation can be reduced to the life-stories of the men who rule it. Rather, it instigates a parallel between a nation's changing fortunes as a whole and those of its government in the broadest sense. It makes historical knowledge unremittingly and in principle administrative, for it focuses on how those things in a social entity which respond to government determine the survival and the value of that entity. This is clear in the kinds of study Arnold recommends of a nation's "external" and "internal" relations. The "external relations" of a state mean its wars, foreign trade and geographical position. Chronicling these is important because they concern the nation's brute collective survival. This chronicle, however, should not concentrate on, say, the details of tactics in a particular battle, but diplomatic, economic and military strategy: on the manipulation of permanent or long-term conditions which pertains to the statesman's task rather than the specialist general's or merchant's.[54] Again, examining a society's "internal life" involves no mere enumeration of legal, constitutional, religious, economic and cultural developments (all of which are legitimate objects of state concern for Arnold). It must include the detailed consideration of the ethical effects of such developments on the state's subjects.[55]

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[54]Arnold, *Introductory Lectures*, 183, 196 et passim.

[55]ibid., 17 - 27 goes into great detail about the moral effects of sitting in criminal judgement and owning property, as examples of the kind of analysis Arnold has in mind.

The point here is twofold: the moral fibre of a state's subjects determines its prosperity and independence, thus it is part of government (and a legitimate historical question) to investigate and administer the institutional conditions of moral fibre ("perfection in outward life is the fruit of perfection in the life within").[56] At the same time, the nation's ultimate success is in making its subjects better people, and it is government's duty to ensure that the institutions over which it presides are not demoralising.[57]

History instructs "the statesman and the citizen", then, by showing what different administrative expedients — in particular structural ones — have done to a nation's people and collective power in the past. It provides knowledge which "may really assist in shaping and and preparing the course of the future" by helping statesmen to "avoid ... difficulties" which previously "render[ed] success impossible". It is the great epistemological support, in this respect, of a polity which may "do God's work on earth" — surviving and prospering as an entity but also gaining an institutional structure that enables it to civilise its subjects.[58] In Macaulay a similar

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[56]ibid., 17 - 18.

[57]Because the "unity" of a "political society", such as the nation, affects every aspect of its subjects' lives, "it does not seem easy to conceive that a nation can have any other object than that which is the highest object of every individual in it", namely "the setting forth God's glory by doing his appointed work" (Arnold, *Introductory Lectures*, 12 - 17). An appendix to this lecture applies this principle to the nineteenth century debate about Disestablishment, taking issue with Gladstone's theoretical rejection of the "moral theory of the state".

[58]Arnold, *Introductory Lectures*, 40.

"science" is given theoretically, as "the connection of causes and effects ... lessons of moral and political wisdom":[59] an "experimental" and "progressive" knowledge of the government of nation-states.[60] Macaulay's historiography reveals identical concerns to Arnold, except in avoiding any notion of a religious dimension to administration. First, the political knowledge history makes available is about collective rather than individual power: the inexorable "progress" of England,[61] the resilience of the Roman Catholic Church,[62] the precipitous decline of Spain.[63] Second, in a number of statements about the history of England (Macaulay's major historiographical interest) he envisages this collective object as an autonomous entity. This entity, moreover, is understood administratively, in terms of a reciprocal relation between two elements: "the history of the people as well as the history of the government".[64] His focus, in other words, is once again the interface between structures and the subjects those

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[59]Macaulay, "Hallam", *Critical and Historical Essays*, Everyman edition, 2 volumes, i, 1.

[60]Macaulay, "Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., i, 291.

[61]Macaulay, "Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., i, 292.

[62]"There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church etc." "Von Ranke", *Critical and Historical Essays,* Everyman edition, ii, 38 - 9.

[63]"Whoever wishes to be well acquainted with the morbid anatomy of governments, whoever wishes to know how great states may be made feeble and wretched, should study the history of Spain." "War of the Spanish Succession", *Critical and Historical Essays*, Everyman edition, ii, 74.

[64]Macaulay, *History of England*, Everyman edition, 3 volumes, i, 10.

structures condition: the relation between "the constant movement of the public mind" and "constant change in the institutions of a great society".[65] One way in which this comes out is Macaulay's insistence that great revolutions in the political structure of a society arise from much longer-breathed movements of ideological change.[66] More complexly, he parallels changes in structure brought about by governments with an autonomous principle of national progress residing in the people. (This principle is "the constant progress of physical knowledge and the constant effort of every man to better himself".)[67] As the history of England most successfully reveals, what is at stake in this relation is the simultaneous production of collective strength and of the individual prosperity and moral advance of subjects.[68] The "history of progress" is the slow accumulation of changes in constitutional, religious and economic structure, which give the people's energy more and more conducive conditions, resulting in increasing national power and increasing levels of individual enlightenment.[69] All of these changes derive from an interaction between "national mind" and governmental

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[65]Macaulay, "Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., i, 292.

[66]Macaulay, "History", 367.

[67]Macaulay, *History of England*, Everyman edition, 3 volumes, i, 217.

[68]Macaulay, "Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., i, 292. It is a shift from "personal slavery", "superstition", "brutal ignorance" and racial submission to political freedom, imperial power, unprecedented technological and philosophical knowledge and classic cultural achievement.

[69]Macaulay, "Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., i, 292 - 3.

decision.[70] All of them entail knock-on effects from one area of institutional development to the others.[71] It is by tracing this mutually reinforcing, doubly originative causal sequence that the generalisable lesson of English history can be ascertained — a lesson which nations without England's fortunate experience can only learn by seeing England's past thus represented.[72]

Both Arnold and Macaulay, then, present historical knowledge in directly administrative terms. As well as being an inspiring spectacle and a record of facts, it examines the the causes of a society's collective growth and decline. It focuses on changes of structure and policy as they connect to this spectacle: in particular via the

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[70]Macaulay, "Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., i, 294.

[71]The first pages of the *History of England* note the massive increase in productivity, population, power and scientific knowledge in England since the Settlement of 1688 established the correct relation between the power of the monarch and of parliament (*History of England*, 1 - 2). (This relation has an economic dimension because it leads to the withering away of the King's right to grant monopoly, and therefore to a kind of internal free trade.)

[72]This lesson concerns the far-reaching effects of political moderation and compromise, which even now spare her the "destroying revolution[s]" of continental Europe in 1848, and their attendant disruption of the conditions of prosperity and civilisation. "Trade has become suspended, and industry paralysed. ... Doctrines hostile to all sciences, to all arts, to all industry, to all domestic charities, doctrines which, if carried into effect, would, in thirty years, undo all that thirty centuries have done for mankind, and would make the fairest provinces of France and Germany as savage as Congo or Patagonia, have been avowed from the tribune and defended by the sword." Macaulay, *History of England*, Everyman edition, 3 volumes, 2, 214 - 215. E. A. Freeman and John Kemble also attribute England's avoidance of the revolutionary outbreaks of 1848 to its constitution.

private and public activity of its subjects. Carlyle differs markedly from these two writers in rejecting any scientific claims for historical knowledge. His understanding of historiography's epistemological condition undermines the terms in which they defend its philosophical integrity — their notions of positive, abstract truth or the tracing of causes and effects. Nevertheless, as an examination of "On History", "Characteristics" and *On Heroes* shows, he still regards proper historical knowledge in terms of administrative principle, rather than isolated or even poetical fact. "Thoughts On History", Carlyle's most extended consideration of historiography, splits historical work into two — that produced by the "Artist in History" and that produced by the "Artisan". Both necessarily narrate only a tiny proportion of the events of the past, and in Carlyle's analysis of contemporary history these narratives tend more and more to focus only on "one or other of the phases of human Life". (The phrase alludes to separately conceived histories of political or economic conditions, religion, science/technology/philosophy, art, law, manners, and so on.)[73] Both provide rules of thumb about "combination[s] of circumstances, political, moral, economical, and the issues [they have] led to" in these "phases".[74] Both therefore instruct "us" about how "man's moral well-being had been and might be promoted" and likewise "his physical well-being".[75] Both are, in other words, administrative. The former simply leads to a deeper, less reductive examination of the relations

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[73] "Thoughts On History", 417-8.

[74] ibid., 416.

[75] ibid., 417.

between institutional change and ethical change, entailing notions of causality which deny history's administrative information any scientific status but which nevertheless make the administrative relation govern all historiography. Where the Artisan concentrates on "the outward mechanism ... of the object" ("Ecumenic Council-halls", for instance, in a history of religion) the Artist looks also at "the object itself" ("the hearts of Believing Men").[76] Where the Artisan traces only "chainlets of 'causes and effects'" within the "phase" he is studying, the Artist takes account of the infinite nature of historical causation.[77] He observes the causal interaction of events in different "phases"[78] and keeps in sight that the object of history is "an epitome of man's whole interest and form of life" in a past society.[79] In both cases, that is, the shift from Artist to Artisan involves a more focussed and also more comprehensive study of the parellelism of institutional and subjective change. Despite the gulf in epistemological theory, in other words, Carlyle identifies historical knowledge just as Arnold and Macaulay do. History tracks changes in the "outward figure of Life" and

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[76] ibid., 417.

[77] The past is "a broad, deep Immensity" in which "every single event is the offspring not of one, but of all other events, prior or contemporaneous, and will combine with all others to give birth to new". "Thoughts On History", 415.

[78] A historian should "look well around him from his path, tracking it out with the eye, not ... with the nose". Thus the "single lines" of "Artisan" historiography give way to a sense of multiple lines: "running path after path through the Impassable, in manifold directions and intersections, to secure for us some oversight of the Whole". ibid., 416, 418.

[79] ibid., 417.

also its "inward condition": it follows the relationships between structure and "the conscious or half-conscious aim of mankind" — the subjectivity those structures administer.[80]

It is not merely the administrative focus of historiography that joins Carlyle with Arnold and Macaulay, however, but the individualisation and normalisation of the object this focus entails. Political knowledge in the latter two historians, as we have seen, means viewing nations as autonomous entities, and examining how their social structures affect collective power and subjective well-being via ethics in a virtuous or vicious circle of rise or decline. The usefulness of history depends on this sort of analysis, for it enables the present to extract patterns of administrative change in correlation with national and moral success, and thus guide its own processes of change more nimbly. "On History" justifies historiography in terms of providing information about subjective "well-being". "Characteristics" — and indeed much of Carlyle's work, literary or historiographical — reveals that this depends on collective health, a condition measured here by the unselfconscious nature of a society's dominion and the consequent ethical "elevation" of its inhabitants. "Characteristics", in fact, proffers a theory of societies as collective beings which has much in common with Arnold. Societies are structured like individuals and bind subjects in a total "unity" of purpose which for both is ultimately religious. Carlyle, however, is more overtly totalitarian and communitarian in his language. For him, every institution and habit of a society bar none is organised by the particular spiritual intuition, or ideal of

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[80] ibid., 414.

loyalty, which animates it. At the same time, the completeness and moral value of an individual depends on being an active and unselfconscious member of a collective. As such, institutional conditions directly affect ethical value. Only when the collective itself is "healthy" — when it is vigorous and unanxious about its ideals and mission, when its institutional unity is unchallenged — can it be at once strong and elevating. When this vigour passes, however — when periods come in which old ideals fail to command faith and new have not yet arisen — society falls apart from within and even heroic souls can make little personal headway.[81] *Heroes* repeats this analysis, in the context of a more wide-ranging purview of history itself. Here societies are also ranked according to the progressive refinement of the form of Hero-Worship which provides their unifying spiritual Idea. Each, however, is assumed to provide a noble life for its subjects in its youth, and at least some moral potential for as long as its unity persists: the latter, indeed, provides Carlyle with a repeated rhetorical and logical measure of the worth of alien modes of belief. In both cases, however, the past is viewed through a similar lens to Macaulay's and Arnold's. Like them, he correlates institutional conditions, collective strength and individual elevation via ethical practice, and suggests that political action may be guided on the basis of that correlation. There is a substantial difference, of course, in his estimate of the kind of politics such a history entails — a much greater concentration on ideological change, rather than the minutiae of constitutional or economic structure, because for Carlyle "the spiritual always determines the material".[82] Nevertheless,

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[81] Carlyle, "Characteristics", *Edinburgh Review*, 54 (December 1831), 359-63.

[82] *On Heroes etc.*, op. cit., 155.

since this preference arises from his particular analysis of the conditions of collective strength — which for Carlyle, unlike Arnold or Macaulay, do not depend on specific forms of social organisation — the main point remains.[83] Historiography's administrative focus includes an organicist measure of national worth: dominion and individual progress correlatively determine a society's value.

All three writers, then, regard historical knowledge as a knowledge of administrative expedient. All three, in consequence, suggest that the past be made visible in terms of a history of institutions which runs in parallel with a history of subjectivity. All three seek in that history principles of collective strength in relation to administrative action and its effect on ethics. What does this mean in terms of relations of power-knowledge? The programme of political knowledge means that historiography individualizes and normalizes the past under the historian's gaze. Surveillance, as it appears in disciplinary power, implies a dossier on its object which treats this object as a unique creature, but construes this uniqueness solely as a peculiar relation to the kinds and standards of behaviour it wishes to investigate. It also involves the construction of the object as one inside which there already exists an impulse to fulfil the behavioural norms surveillance measures. Each of these characteristics appear in the programme of history as administrative knowledge. Carlyle, Arnold and Macaulay each insist that past societies, as autonomous entities,

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[83]Macaulay, as we have seen, sees the Revolution Settlement of 1688 and its corollaries as the basic form of maximum social advance. For Arnold, though he regards a continual adjustment of constitutional structures as inevitable, the Christian religion remains paramount and essential.

are unique combinations of habit and structure.[84] To approach this uniqueness too closely, however — to confine oneself to a depiction of this uniqueness — is for each writer explicitly to sacrifice real historical knowledge. It is not the uniqueness of the past which defines historiography, but the process of change within which that uniqueness flowers and fades. This process can only be observed from the vantage of the present; it even requires specific commitment to the life of the present to be properly understood.[85] Moreover, as we have seen, change is investigated by quite specific and limited questions — questions about social structures of all kinds

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[84]Macaulay, "History", 362-4; Carlyle, "On History", 82. Arnold celebrates classical history for its juxtaposition of an unprecedented variety of social organisations and their results in the *Preface to The History of the Peleponnesian War by Thucydides*, xxii.

[85]In "Lecture One" of the *Introductory Lectures* Arnold rejects the "full and distinct impression of the events, characters, institutions, manners, and ways of thinking" of a period as mere "antiquarianism". History only arises from a hindsight which assesses "what part [the period] has played ... in the great drama of the world's history; what of its influence has survived and what has perished". This can only be achieved by historians with "a lively knowledge of the present". (*Introductory Lectures*, op. cit., 107 -114.) Cf., *History of Rome*, "Preface", vi - vii. Macaulay makes identical statements in a discussion of the historiography of Sir James Mackintosh, Charles Fox and James Mill in "Sir James Mackintosh". The former pair are not "antiquarians" because their experience in contemporary politics gives them insight into party conflict in the past. James Mill, meanwhile, is commended because he can show where the past was lacking and where it was tending by virtue of hindsight. ("Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., i, 274, 291.) Carlyle rejects any history which gives no idea "how men lived and had their being" and which thus makes no contribution to the vision of how men's lives were conditioned and how those conditions changed. Stories of Darnley and Mary Stuart, we recall, are mere "Fashion Journal" scandal ("Boswell's Life of Johnson", 388-9).

(economic, constitutional, cultural, ideological), the ethical levels these structures condition, and their reciprocal production of the future. Just as important, change is gauged in relation to a quite explicit project which has nothing to do with the past's own priorities. (This is the project I mentioned above as the interest of modern state power: the measuring of a nation's brute collective existence and the individual elevation of its inhabitants, as an index of successful change.) The uniqueness of the past is acknowledged, in other words, but only in normalised terms: boiled down to a unique administrative fate, observable only from the present, and measured by the present's norms of administrative success. To complete the picture, the administrative relation and the present's standards are conceived as the genetic structure of the past itself. It is this assumption, after all, which grounds historiography's usefulness. Only if the causal patterns uncovered by historians are thought to have determined change in the past could they provide the present with guidance about its own future. Historical knowledge, in other words, not only sees the past exclusively as the field of a complex administrative mechanism, it places that mechanism as the very creator of the past. Moreover, when institutions and ethics combine and recombine in complex reciprocal production of a society's fate, they do so entirely according to institutional and moral standards the present identifies. These standards are the basis of long-term survival, even where the past itself has no consciousness that this is so.[86] As such,

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[86]In fact, each of these historians explicitly denies the past consciousness about its "highest aims", in Arnold's words. For Carlyle, consciousness is an index of failure, not success ("Characteristics", 362). For Macaulay, the fascination of England's constitutional history is its undirected approach to perfect form.

the genesis of the past willy-nilly incorporates and strives toward the standards of the present, since to fail in them, however unconsciously, involves the society's disappearance. In other words, the surveillance undertaken by historiography entails the internal construction of the object by historiography's standards.

There is one further aspect to the disciplining of the object of historiography: the way these three historians construct a hierarchy of possible source materials for historical knowledge. As Rosemary Jann has shown, each of them accepted the methodological developments associated with Niebuhr and von Ranke — both the expansion of the kinds of sources historians might use and the hermeneutic protocols for establishing a source's reliability. Jann does not point out, however, that these three writers also understand sources within a hierarchy of potential information which entails that the sources of historical knowledge frame history as a kind of administrative know-how. Historical knowledge is always already adapted to the norms of institutional dominance and survival, either because administrative sources are the most trustworthy or because what the dominant institutions see are the only things that have been worth recording. Arnold, for instance, devotes a full lecture to the course of investigation by which a historian may become familiar with his chosen epoch. It is almost entirely a course of reading. It begins with the study of contemporary sources (to establish a pattern of events and the subjectivity which animated them) and ends with the study of later histories of the epoch (to purge the ideological bias of the past's view of itself).[87] When one studies contemporary

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[87]Arnold, *Introductory Lectures*, 86, 111 - 2.

sources one is supposed to absorb first statutes and treaties, then the writings of eminent politicians, then of eminent men-of-letters, then of those eminent in local fields of endeavour, finally second or third-rate literature.[88] The most trustworthy sources, in other words, even for the passions of the past, come from governments or work that has received the imprimatur of posterity. A normalising knowledge of historical subjectivity is thus built into the very selection of materials, rather than arising from their analysis. The historian gathers information so that the past already conforms to questions of the relation between collective survival, individual moral advancement and the administrative relation. The same effect arises from Carlyle's discussion of historical tradition in "On History Again". Carlyle juxtaposes two views of the state of the historical record. It is "falsified, blotted out, torn ... but a shred of it in existence".[89] On the other hand, the production of spoken and written discourse which forms the record — and which is itself a kind of baseline historiography — is unfathomably large, and "needs ... to be compressed".[90] This principle of "compression" is the long term tendency for people to "permanently speak only of what is extant and actively alive beside them". "The things that have produced fruit, nay whose fruit still grows, turn out to be the things chosen for record and writing of."[91] The statement is glossed by the observation that the Battle of Châlons is

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[88]ibid., 90 - 106.

[89]Carlyle, "Quae Cogitavit", *Fraser's Magazine*, 7 (May 1833), 586.

[90]ibid., 587.

[91]ibid., 588.

forgotten, while "the poor police-court treachery of a wretched Iscariot" is not. What is "mainly" — eventually what is "solely" — recorded, in other words, is the genealogy of dominant and surviving institutions (such as Christianity). Once again, we see an administratively normalised past, and again it is not a question of interpretation: the sources of modern historiography are such that only the normalisation remains.[92]

The Historiographical Self

Consideration of the question of sources provides a good introduction to the second disciplinary process which goes on in these texts. As we have seen, the object of historiographical knowledge and the object of historiographical power are identical, while the former constitutes an individualising and normalising surveillance of the latter. However, the problem of sources reminds us both that this surveillance cannot

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[92]Macaulay, in "History", 364-5, observes that the enlargement of historical investigation to include information below the "dignity" of traditional history does not mean that all information is equally valuable. Only what illuminates the historically significant, in manners or politics, is to enter historiography: and as we already know, the historically significant is the past made known as the repository of "moral and political wisdom". Again, selection among sources constitutes a normalising knowledge of the past, though here the selection is based baldly on what the historian wants to convey, not the source's inevitable condition. Palgrave commends the constitution of England for preserving historical sources of a normalising kind. Based on precedent, and early a unitary state at peace with itself, England has records of a completeness no other nation can boast. English history therefore provides the best materials for revealing the real conditions of constitutional change. Palgrave, *History of Normandy and England*, i, 82 - 87.

be constant and that the knowledge arising from it may be distorted in order to produce an image of the past as an individualised and normalised entity. First of all, as we have just shown, these writers conceive the documentary materials upon which history stakes its claim as a factual imagination of the past within a particular hierarchy. This conception serves two purposes. On the one hand, it means that the particular object of historiography, the story of the global administrative relation between subjects and institutions, emerges as the only legitimate or even possible object of historical knowledge. On the other hand, it is a grid which states that what has survived, however fragmentary, is necessarily an epitome of the whole story of the administrative relation in a particular epoch. In other words, it substitutes for the idea of a complete surveillance of the administrative relation in the past the idea of a surveillance which models everything which is salient about that relation. This possibility is extended and reinforced by an element of these historians' practice brought out by Rosemary Jann. Neither Carlyle, Arnold or Macaulay was impartial either investigating the new sources opened by Niebuhrian method or using its new protocols. Each justified the sacrifice of factual precision to pedagogic shape by urging that history had to be inspiring and present clear sociological patterns.[93] What emerges, in other words, is that historiography is a surveillance which has some leeway not only to frame and extrapolate from but even to modify the entities it watches, in order to construct an image of them which (a) conforms to the shape of an individualised, normalised and total representation of the story of the administrative relation and (b) which thus enables historiography to function as a discourse which

[93]Macaulay, "History", 364; "Burleigh", 78.

brings about change in that story. This means that historiography's function as a disciplinary surveillance of the relationship between subjects and institutions depends as much on the subject of historiography and its committment to creating the spectacle of that form of knowledge *ex nihilo*, as it does on the cognitive substance of the object itself.

What this means for the power-knowledge relations of historiography can be illuminated by comparing historiography's knowledge of the past with the novelist's knowledge of the characters and causal structure of the world of the novel. The latter has been analysed in David Miller's *The Novel and the Police*. Miller suggests that panopticism is the epistemological condition of the realist novel.[94] On the one hand, in this genre the narrator is omniscient — cognisant of every detail of action, thought, intention and cause in plot and character. Just as important, however, is the particular genetic structure that the Victorian realist novel proffers. Everything that is made known, to the tiniest detail, is tied into the genesis of the plot. The represented world of the realist novel, that is, is one in which nothing a subject does or knows is without consequence. It is a world under two mechanisms of surveillance, both of which are panoptic because they impinge on everything: the eye of the future and the eye of the narrator. In the represented world of historiography, conversely, these structuring gazes exist only as rhetorical and theoretical ploys, not functioning epistemological conditions. Everything, both that a particular work of historiography and/or historical

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[94]D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Los Angeles, Berkeley and London, Univ. of Cal. Press, 1988), chapter one.

evidence as a whole makes visible of the past, even details, contributes to history's plot and has consequences upon the future. Everything participates in the causal pattern or patterns historiography seeks to illuminate. What is made visible, however, even to the historian in his/her research is neither everything that could be known about the events and personalities that have existed nor the total genetic structure which surrounds them — all the determinants upon them and their determinations of the future. Only a very truncated record exists even of what is regarded as salient to the administrative relation. The future of history's plot, unlike that of the novel's plot, is necessarily unknowable because "we do nothing but enact History, we say little but recite it"[95] so that its future stretches beyond the death both of the historian and the reader of historiography. There is, as a result, a stark difference between the novel and historiography as to the relations between the subject of discourse and the object constructed in discourse. With the former, the subject's representation of a panoptically surveyed world is a condition of narrative structure which cannot be gainsaid. With the latter, this representation is under constant pressure from the exigencies of available source matter — both its paucity and its incoherence. The construction of the image of the past as a totally (or virtually totally) surveyed entity therefore becomes a contingent task. Its result can be deprecated and challenged as a properly carried out surveillance of its object. It is, in other words, something which can not only be examined as to the practice of the subject which produced it, but specifically as to the fulfilment of the norms of behaviour which are thought to be embodied in the activity of surveillance.

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[95]Carlyle, "Thoughts on History", 414.

The historian, then, must produce a simulacrum of a world which operates like the world of the novel, but centred on the relationship between institution and subjectivity. He/she must model a world in which every action and event impinges on the unfolding story of that relationship, and which gives the impression of being a total model of the real world itself. Yet the epistemological conditions of historiography preclude the total collection of all the data which are theoretically involved in the story it tells. Two consequences flow from this. First, historiography becomes, in two ways, a fictional discourse. Not only must the historian invent a mimetic fullness where none exists, but he/she must envision the documentary sources of history as partaking, in some degree, of the condition of fiction. As we have seen, a source cannot be taken as read, but must be fitted into a grid which analyses it as the product of a partial and emotionally committed view of the total historical situation or event it records. To posit that all historical records are poetic in this way is seen as the condition of historiography as a discourse whose stories convey real events — it is the activity which guarantees that history is essentially non-fiction. Yet it is also an activity which locates history's factual basis wholly in the work carried out by the historian. The actual objects the historian surveys are all like poems: perception of events "through the medium of the imagination set in action by the feelings".[96] It is only the objects *presented* as being surveyed in the epistemological relationship *re*-presented in historiographical texts which are

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96 J. S. Mill, "What is Poetry", in *The Collected Works of J. S. Mill*, vol. 1, ed., J. M. Robson (Toronto and Buffalo, University of Toronto Press, 1974), 347. See Chapter 3 for an examination of poetry as perception of this kind.

supposed to be absolutely reliable: the battles, the laws, the total skein of perception imbricated in these, not the brute individual witness. This contradiction brings us to the second consequence of the epistemological condition of historiography's sources. Since history's special authority cannot be located in its actual materials, but only in what a historian does with those materials, great pressure is placed on the historian's practice of the self. The work of wrenching the recalcitrant evidential fragments which survive into a historiographical narrative and mimetic shape becomes framed by the making of the self which is a pre-condition of producing such a representation. The historiographical text, that is, becomes a site through which to gauge the historian as a person, as well as a site through which the past is subject to a disciplinary knowledge. The historiographical text represents and summarizes two activities: the individualising and normalising knowledge the historian possesses of the past; the collocation of practices which have enabled the historian to win that knowledge. The second set of practices do not consist merely of a technical procedure, but of a training of personality. Historiography thus constitutes a normalising surveillance of its authors as well as of the past.

Let us approach this question first by reprising the kinds of knowledge-relation in which the historian is consituted. As we have seen, history as a mode of knowledge is defined by three interlocking kinds of truth: documented facts about the past; an imaginative revivification of these facts to reveal the poetic (that is emotionally compelling) meaning of the events and subjectivities in them; an ordering of these facts in complex causal series to elucidate the deep patterns of human society. The pursuit of these truths involves the historian in simultaneous hermeneutic, analytic

and mimetic discursive practices. These in turn involve the writer personally in simultaneous relations to the object of knowledge, the society of the reader, and his own passions and beliefs. Each mode of truth limits, corrects and supports the others, both as knowledge and in the sustaining of the historian's persona. It is in this way that history as a discursive practice is also a practice of the self. It propagates an identity, a way of existing in society and in one's own body, as well as a way of knowing. It can do this not merely because it is an ideal, but because sustaining each mode of truth and keeping them in balance is the criterion by which the public measure the historian, and buy his works. That is, because he is himself the object of a disciplinary structure, the historian must not only abide by the protocols of each mode of truth as truth (representing human affairs in accordance with the structure each requires), he must abide by the qualities of mind thought to guarantee these protocols.

How may we sum up historiography as a mode of being? Let us begin with the mode of relation that it specifies between the cognitive subject and its other. To be a historian is to be profoundly captivated and moved by the other. It is to attend raptly to its words and its actions, right down to the smallest details, seeking in them a knowledge not only of oddity, or conformity to formula, but a profound, existential, self-expanding contact, stripping away the veils, entering into the other's life and soul that it may enlarge one's own.[97] At the same time, within this very intimacy, it is to

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[97]See, eg. Carlyle's discussions of biography, and of Robertson and Clarendon, ("Boswell's Life of Johnson", 388; "Biography", 257-8). All of the second part of Past and Present (1843) exemplifies the point. See also, as instances of the aim, Arnold's discussion of the aim of comprehensive source study

remain wholly divorced from the other. It is first of all to look around and beneath its words with a profound mistrust: to ask of every detail *Is this true? Is this typical?*; to suspect everywhere contradictions, fantasies, ignorance.[98] It is, more profoundly, to seek within the other's words and actions an interiority of which the other is not aware, but which the self possesses the principle of, and which connects the self to perceptions of teleological fundamentals.[99] It is to see the other's choices, comforts and thoughts affected beyond its ken by systemic collective pressures which the historian's later vantage has made visible: the social, intellectual, cultural, material conditions the other blindly enacts and tweaks.[100] With this knowledge the historian

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("a full and distinct impression of the events, characters, institutions, manners and ways of thinking of the period", *Introductory Lectures*, 107); and Macaulay's of the Reformation and the past as foreign country ("History", 364-6).

[98]The most comprehensive discussions are in Arnold, *Introductory Lectures*, 86-107, 127-34, 362-89. Macaulay notes as a "most valuable qualit[y] for a historian ... great judgement in weighing testimony", "War of the Succession in Spain", 73.

[99]Arnold's and Carlyle's versions of history are unreservedly religious in their ultimate vision (See, e.g., *Introductory Lectures*, 28; Carlyle, "Thoughts on History", 415). Macaulay's is no Providentialist metahistory, but nonetheless involves a contact with everything that impinges upon the progressive destiny of man (*History of England*, op. cit., i, 217).

[100]See, for the past's unconsciousness of its real determinants, Arnold's rejection of "antiquarianism" (*Introductory Lectures*, 107-114). E. A. Freeman notes that the historian is "to contemplate the [past] as one vast drama, to behold the progress of nations in distant ages and countries, regulated according to one unerring succession of youth, manhood, and age; and at the same time to mark the diversities which attend the operations of this one great law, the influence of

compounds a "magisterial" verdict on the past: deciding for every detail *Is this good in itself? Is it good considering the pressures on the other? Is it good in its effect on the institutions which are to determine the other's action in the future?*.[101] Finally, it is to wholly instrumentalise the intimacy one has achieved, not only politely declining the comprehensiveness of the other's words, but viewing them as so much raw material for the luminous communication of one's own thought.[102]

What about the historian's relations to society and to the self? To be a historian is to possess fiery commitment to being a power for utility and good over the present. The historian is a man of the world, not the cloister. His work aims squarely at moulding change and building the state in its widest sense. Not only does he prepare others for such challenge, his own knowledge derives in part from actual

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geographical position, race, religion, the youth or age of the world itself". He notes "causes and effects of which the actors themselves could hardly have been aware". (*Thoughts on the Study of History, with reference to the proposed changes in the public examinations* [Oxford and London, 1849], 28, 8.)

[101] See, e.g., Macaulay's defence of his admiration for Sir James Mackintosh and James Mill, "Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., 287, 290-92; also his admiration of Henry Hallam's "cold rigid justice" ("Hallam", op. cit., 5), and insistence that historians need "great impartiality in estimating characters" ("The War of Spanish Succession", 73). Note Arnold, *Introductory Lectures*, 114, for making a value judgement on "what part [a past subject] played for good or for evil in the great drama of the world's history. Carlyle commends a culling of history for lessons in "how man's ... well-being has been and might be promoted", "Thoughts On History", 417.

[102] Macaulay, "History", 364, sees this as justification for ignoring class-distinctions in historical subject-matter.

experience in the world of practical politics and practical history.[103] However, this orientation is to be expressed in a particular way. It is to be expressed through an intellectual and inspirational discourse: a *representation* of the self, of knowledge of the other, and of the ideal relation of individual to society, past and present. This entails a certain further construction of the type of self the historian must practice. The historian is a pedagogue, who teaches through narrative. He must therefore have acquired both the credentials of pedagogy and the credentials of the story-teller. His knowledge must be detailed, thorough, accurate, weighty and unprejudiced, his possession of it light and supple. He must therefore have been able to exercise the epic virtues of patience, perseverance, self-control in three directions. He must curb and instrumentalise his passion for the present, not refraining from judgement, but rigorously controlling the sectarian impulses of his own passionate involvement, so that they do not warp judgement.[104] He must wait till he has digested and mastered

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[103]This is the division of the antiquarian from the historian. See for instance Arnold's oft-cited dictum "the history of Greece and Rome is not an idle inquiry about remote ages and forgotten institutions, but a living picture of things present, fitted not so much for the curiosity of the scholar, as for the instruction of the statesman and the citizen". (*The History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides* (Oxford and London, 1842), "Preface", xxiv). Macaulay and Arnold both trenchantly observe that worldly experience, not bookish isolation, gives historical insight. (*Introductory Lectures*, 108-9; "Sir James Mackintosh", 274). Note also Carlyle's vision of the Man of Letters (whose task he attempts to fulfil as Historian): "ruling ... whole nations and generations"; fit to be "tr[ied] first, whether they can govern ... or administer"; gaining the knowledge by which they rule from harsh experience of it (*On Heroes*, op. cit., 154, 169, 167).

[104]Macaulay talks of Henry Hallam's "absolute mastery of feelings of this sort" as an aspect of his "cold rigid justice" ("Hallam", op. cit., 4-5). See also the description of Von Ranke as "equally remote

the past, both as a vast field of detail and as a pattern impinging on teleological imperatives.[105] And he must summon imagination, sensitivity, and feeling to serve (but only serve) his intellect.[106] Not only does his knowledge partially depend on such an exercise, he must also wait till he has the colour, humanity and inspirational capacity to communicate this mastery in fine stories.[107]

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from levity and bigotry, serious and earnest, yet tolerant and impartial" ("Von Ranke's History of the Popes", 38). Arnold similarly insists that "impartiality" does not mean "indifferentism" but refraining from disguising the faults of those whom one approves, *Introductory Lectures*, 387-8.

[105]Arnold's programme for historical research in the first Introductory Lecture details this. Note also Arnold's insistence that "the extremity of scepticism" about history is unjustified — it does demonstrate "principles of government tending to the good of mankind" (*Introductory Lectures*, 390-3). See also Macaulay's commendation of "great diligence in examining authorities" ("War of the Succession in Spain", op. cit., 73) but insistence that Edward Nares, "a man of great industry and research", is "utterly incompetent to arrange [his] materials" — a question not merely of literary but intellectual lack of "perspective" ("Burleigh and His Times", *Critical and Historical Essays*, op. cit., 78). Von Ranke's, conversely, is a "mind fitted both for minute researches and for large speculations", "Von Ranke's History of the Popes", op. cit., 38.

[106]Thomas Wright, the antiquarian, caustically notes how historians' imaginations need to be curbed, "Antiquarianism in England", *Edinburgh Review*, 86 (October 1847), 308.

[107]For an interesting instance of the instrumentalisation of the poetic, see Arnold on the channelling of poetic feeling for landscape into a vision of the geographic structure of a nation, *Introductory Lectures*, 158-67. See also Arnold's regret that Niebuhr lacked the capacity of narration (*History of Rome*, op. cit., vii-viii) and the seminal discussion in Macaulay ("History", 361-2).

There are some differences of emphasis between the three historians we have focused on. These relate on the one hand to the relation between the historian, his/her knowledge and transcendental truths; and on the other to the emphases within the historian's personality. Carlyle's Artist-Historian, for instance, harbours a more apocalyptic or revolutionary relation to the present, a more messianic and extreme vision of what it must learn from the past, and a correspondingly more intense and fervent personality than that of the other historians. (The kinds of change he envisages are not mere developments of established relations, but deep-seated changes in them: the replacement of Christianity and capitalism.) Macaulay, conversely, values an adaptive relation to the present, a gradualist and pragmatic vision of what can be learnt from the past, and a personality correspondingly without excessive supernatural commitments or worshipful tendencies. He envisages a discourse and a personality which is calm, judicially deliberative and serviceable rather than prophetic. Arnold, finally, envisions the ultimate truths history must retail coming not from history itself but from revelation, and a corresponding identity which is explicitly Christian, and which rigourously instrumentalises poetry and feeling rather than making them elements of the historian's proper pursuits.

We can now see why Arthurian historiography should have been so problematic. It is not simply a question of the factual paucity of the record of that king, though this is important. The lack of sources entails two other difficulties. History's drive to speculative re-constructions of events, personalities and whole cultural entities is deprived of the checks which a multitude of documentary material supplies. All the risks of personal, party political and fictional projection are

magnified; and even the serious historian has little chance of detecting the effects of such biases on his work. Even more seriously, history's drive to admistrative normalisation is immediately frustrated. It is quite possible to make relatively concrete projections of some of the subjectivity or mode of life of the sixth century Celts. Works by William Barnes, John Jones, Edward Davies and Sharon Turner do this in some detail. What cannot be done, however, is to establish with equal concretion shifts in political, military and religious institutions, or specific series of events. The connection between moral life, structure and national fate cannot be traced. The reasons why the Saxon Conquest happened, but also took over a century, cannot therefore be revealed. Serious administrative historians, like Macaulay, Kemble and Turner, can only go into detail for the period following the establishment of the Heptarchy, long after the Arthurian years. As such, the values attached to the abstract ordering of the manifold have no anchor. All that remains is the possibility of an antiquarian listing of isolated information or the relative freedom with reality of the historical novel. History as a practice of the self becomes almost impossible to sustain. The presence of a long and various mythical tradition, in which institutional, military, moral and personal histories combine, tempts historians to a normalisation of the sixth century which reflects not their judicial but their wishful identity. The social commitment of the historian becomes contaminated by passions and private feelings which cannot be assimilated (as they might in poetry) to an immediate personal relation to the infinite, but only to what is sectarian, divisive and ephemeral.

What have we seen in this chapter? I have examined the discourse of history in two main ways. I have examined it as a mode of knowledge but also as a practice

of the self. Both these elements are connected to my interest in the conjunctions of power and knowledge in Tennyson's *Idylls*. First of all, history is a component of the Arthurian discourse which Tennyson embodies in *Idylls of the King*. As we now see, this means that the epistemological structure of the narrative form broached by the poem is, so far as it is history, that of a disciplinary surveillance of the other. Specifically, it is a disciplinary surveillance of the changing relation between subjectivity and its collective and institutional conditions. Second, historiography as a form is a knowledge of the other which depends upon the other's incomplete surveillance. It therefore depends upon a representation of the self, within a representation that what is known is complete, as a being able to sustain a disciplinary knowledge in the context of a fragmentary manifold. It is an expression of knowledge of the other which is simultaneously a constitution of the subject of expression as a subject under surveillance. These relationships between knowledge, expression, the practice of the self and surveillance are explored extensively in *Idylls*.

Other themes, important to *Idylls*, have also emerged. Historiography has a social purpose, connected to the creation and maintenance of a community through the binding of individuals (particularly those with direct political responsibilities in the narrow sense of political) to actions which reflect the institutional conditions of the nation. History is also serious: it requires the control and direction of passion, of short-term, self-centred aims, of entertainment and escape. It demands these qualities in particular through differentiating itself from fiction and from mere accumulation of facts. Since, however, the epistemology of history cannot command reality in a simple, positivist sense — a multitude of perspectives on events or their insufficiency

is always allowed — this seriousness and commitment to the public realm is not only a border war with fiction or shapelessness but one which must incorporate a certain kind of fiction, or rather virtual reality, into itself. This is a virtuality created by an highly reduced, hedged, checked, forensically underpinned imagination. It is as a result a kind of fiction from which only the values of epic exultation, uplift and heroic inspiration may be gathered. Nevertheless, the tension between what is attested, what is real, what is virtual and what is effective remains at the centre of historical discourse. What also emerges consistently is a theme which connects epistemological practice to ethics: to a certain relation to the self, the other and society. To know involves original activities, whether in the realm of perceiving patterns, poetic capacities, or even mere factual realities. To know also involves a reduction of passion and self-interest. Because of its contradictions, historical knowledge entails a particularly recursive and embedded version of this practice of the self in cognition. The other must be reached out to, but also overridden, in many ways: the self must control its individual feelings in the interests of utility, reality and the public in many ways. These themes are quite directly connected to the problem of discipline as a mode of knowledge, because the historian is always either the subject or object of a cognition. The problem of normalisation and surveillance specifically involve the relations between self, other and society, reality and fiction, that history reveals. These problems recur in the ways poetry is theorised during the same period. With the different mode of knowledge, however, these relations are worked through in rather different ways and in rather different values and discussions. It is to these that we must now turn.

CHAPTER THREE

A POETICS OF DISCIPLINE

At the beginning of chapter one we noted that, to understand *Idylls of the King*, it was necessary to understand how Arthurian discourse operates, the latter being the poem's governing epistemological structure. We have now seen that this means investigating the modes of knowledge of historiography and poetry during the middle years of the nineteenth century: Arthurianism involves an epistemological crux, an undecideable hesitation between history and poetry. In the present chapter we will complete this investigation and examine the construction of poetic knowledge in this period. The chapter focuses on the critical writing of a number of influential middle-class men of letters writing between 1830 and 1860. Once again, it scrutinizes the network of relations between the subject of knowledge, the object of knowledge, the discursive representation of knowledge and the social function of discourse. In this case, what emerges is a triple-pronged disciplinary apparatus. As with historiography, the main object of poetic knowledge is also its main object of power -- that object here being subjectivity understood as a complex, autonomous assemblage of perceptual, emotional and rational consciousness. Also, as with historiography, there is a second disciplinary circuit in which the display of knowledge leaves the subject of discourse open to

measurement and judgement. In this case, the measurement not only impinges upon a poetical practice of the self, but composes the interiority of the authorial subject itself as an object of surveillance. Finally, the symbolic language which poetry uses to achieve its special mode of communication incorporates a further individualising and normalising gaze. The whole of the natural world and the world of human interaction are inextricably linked to the normalised subjectivity which poetry transfers from poem to reader. As before, the main purpose is to establish these factors in writing which is directly implicated with Tennyson, and it is such texts alone which I investigate. However, because scholarship has not yet noted that a disciplinary structure is significant in any poetics in this period, questions arise which range outside that limited set of discourses. Before proceeding to a detailed examination of texts, it is necessary to enumerate these issues.

It is best to begin with a brief summary of how and where disciplinary ideas emerge in the poetics. Between 1830 and 1860, the dominant discourse about poetry shuttles between three issues, often noticed previously in scholarship. Poetry is defined as an essentially expressive, mimetic and imaginative discourse. This discourse communicates possibilities of consciousness which are a formative influence on what holds society together as a society.[1] Without being marginal or necessarily oppositional,

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[1] The poet's consciousness may filter down over the centuries into "national life" (A. H. Hallam, "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry", *Englishman's Magazine*, 1 [August 1831], in Isobel Armstrong, ed., *Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry 1830 - 1870* [London, Athlone Press 1972], 90 - 91), become generally accepted as centrally human (Coventry Patmore, "New Poets", *Edinburgh Review*, 104 [October 1856], 339 - 40, Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's Eve of the Conquest", *Edinburgh Review* [April 1849], 479) help to bring about change in tyrannical hegemonic attitudes to form a new more democratic hegemony (J.

such consciousness does not wholly synchronise with the particular phase of feeling and moral practice which is hegemonic in a poet's lifetime, being always imagined as in some way "improving".[2] All these ideas may be found in Romantic speculation, but are re-emphasised in the years just before and after the First Reform Bill as a number of young periodical critics mull over the Romantic achievement. Together these assumptions highlight four problematic relations, which again have been often documented: the poet's personal condition as a moral and sensitive being; the knowledge he/she has of the common world and of feeling in particular; the display of all three in a discourse of the imagination; and the way in which that discourse infects the reader. It is in the resolution of these problematic relations that disciplinary ideas emerge. The way the best poetry is supposed to work, the thing it is supposed to change, the objects of knowledge it is supposed to constitute, and the efficacy of the symbolic forms it is supposed to draw on, all correspond to the elements of a disciplinary model of power. Poetry is defined by the

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S. Mill, "The Two Types of Poetry", *Monthly Repository*, n. s. 7 [October 1833], in *The Collected Works of J. S. Mill*, vol. 1, ed. J. M. Robson [Toronto and Buffalo, Toronto University Press], 364 - 5), reinforce the centrifugal values of reason and "justness" (Henry Taylor, "Wordsworth's Sonnets", *Quarterly Review*, 69 [December 1841], 11 - 13), discourse about the "Cabinet questions" of life (David Masson, "Theories of Poetry and a New Poet", *North British Review*, 19 [August 1853], 323), reinforce central religious values (John Keble, "Sacred Poetry", *Quarterly Review*, 32 [January 1824], 231 - 2).

[2] Alan Sinfield was the first to moot the explicit theoretical absorption of poetry into hegemonic bourgeois ideology (*Alfred Tennyson* [Oxford, Blackwell Press, 1986], 11-21). What I suggest above is a poetry positioned a little more precisely: as an explicit agent of a phase of hegemonic consciousness which 'improves' on the attributes of that consciousness as they appear in the immediate conjuncture a poem is released to.

activities of normalising surveillance, the imitable display of surveillance and the changing of a deep inner subjectivity.

Why is this significant? Scholarship has not yet noted that any of the resolutions of the problems of poetics in this period has disciplinary traits. This is not because the philosophical and epistemological pedigree of early and mid Victorian poetics has gone unexamined — quite the contrary. In the last forty years, there have been many illuminating works on this subject, covering the issues of expressive and mimetic discourse, the qualities of observation and subjectivity that specify poetry, and poetics' relation to more general post-Cartesian and post-Kantian epistemological debate.[3] Since

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[3]Alba H. Warren, *English Poetic Theory 1825-1865* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1950) traces Baconian and Aristotelian critical themes in the work of twelve major theorists. M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford, OUP, 1953), though his main focus is Romantic, has much interesting discussion of the early Victorian expressive theorists. W. David Shaw, *The Lucid Veil: Poetic Truth in the Victorian Age* (London, Athlone Press, 1987), proffered as a sequel to Abrams's work, comprehensively surveys philosophies of knowledge and interpretation in the period, distinguishing expressive, oracular and purist traditions of poetics. Carol Christ has two works, *The Finer Optic: The Aesthetic of Particularity in Victorian Poetry* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1975) and *Victorian and Modern Poetics* (Chicago and London, Chicago University Press, 1984), which develop concerns in poetics about the relation between subject and object in poetry common to all post-Cartesian thought, as do Lawrence Starzyck's *The Imprisoned Splendour: A Study of Victorian Critical Theory* (New York and London, Kennikat Press, 1977) and *The Dialogue of the Mind with Itself: Early Victorian Poetry and Poetics* (Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 1992). All four texts detail ways in which early-mid Victorian poetics refine expressive theory in an attempt to overcome loss of confidence in the autonomy and authority of the creating subject. Similar concerns occur in Robert Langbaum's seminal *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1957) and Jane McCusker's unpublished PhD thesis, "Robert Browning and the Victorian Debate about the Proper

the early 1980s, further interest has developed in the ideological work of these poetics, especially in the spheres of gender and class, including the emergence of a distinct working-class discourse.[4] Investigations of the relation between poetry, poetics and

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Subject Matter for Poetry" (University of Glasgow, 1982) the latter relating them to controversy about the impact of the object on the reception of poetry. The preface to Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry 1830-1870* (London, Athlone Press, 1972) relates the widely discussed criterion of sympathy in Victorian criticism, and broaches the question of its lack of an established critical language. See below for a discussion of Armstrong's important *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (London, Routledge, 1993). See also Ekbert Faas, *Retreat Into The Mind: Victorian Poetry and the Rise of Psychiatry* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988); Mary W. Schneider, *Poetry in the Age of Democracy: The Literary Criticism of Matthew Arnold* (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1989).

[4]See Alan Sinfield, "The Politics of Poetry", *Alfred Tennyson* (Oxford, Blackwell Press, 1986), 11-56; Carol Christ, "The Female Subject in Victorian Poetry", *English Literary History*, 54, 2 (Summer 1987), 385-401; Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge, CUP, 1995). For investigations of smaller fractions of middle-class poetics, see Joanne Shattock and Michael Woolf, eds., *The Victorian Periodical Press: Samplings and Soundings* (Leicester and Toronto, Leicester University Press, 1982). Many essays in *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* and *Victorian Periodicals Review* also illuminate the question of ideology in relation to poetics. See for instance Ed Block Jr., "Carlyle, Lockhart, and the Germanic Connection: The Periodical Context of Carlyle's Early Criticism", *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 16, 1 (Spring 1983), 20-7; H. B. De Groot, "The Status of the Poet in an Age of Brass: Isaac d'Israeli, Peacock, W. J. Fox and others", *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 10, 3 (September 1977), 106-22; Michael W. Hyde, "The Role of 'Our Scottish Readers' in the History of *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*", *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 14, 4 (Winter 1981), 135-40. Lyn Pykett, "The Real vs. the Ideal: Theories of Fiction in Periodicals, 1850-70", *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 15, 2 (Summer 1982), 63-74; Michael Lund, "Novels, Writers and Readers in 1850", *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 17, 1 & 2 (Spring and Summer 1984), 15-28. Working-class poetics has received its first major

power in Tennyson's poetry have also emerged which are deeply influenced by Foucault's work on sexuality and the human sciences.[5] However, none of this scholarship has examined the relation between the modes of knowledge posited by Victorian poetics and the structures of normalising surveillance.[6] This chapter alone, of course, cannot provide

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study in Paul Thomas Murphy, *Toward a Working-Class Canon: Literary Criticism in British Working-Class Periodicals 1816-1858* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1994).

[5]See Elliot M. Gilbert, "The Female King: Tennyson's Arthurian Apocalypse", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 98, 5 (October 1983), 863-79; Claire M. Berardini, "Tennyson and the Poetic Forms of Resistance", in Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys, eds., *Victorian Identities: Social and Cultural Formations in Nineteenth Century Literature* (London, Macmillan, 1996), 81-96; James Eli Adams, "Harlots and Base Interpretors: Scandal and Slander in *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30, 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 421-39; Margaret Linley, "Sexuality and Nationality in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30, 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 365-86; Linda M. Shires, "Patriarchy, Dead Men and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30, 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 401-19; Ian McGuire, "Epistemology and Empire in *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30, 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 387-400. Herbert Tucker has also published a number of studies of the relation between Tennyson's poetry, Victorian categories of œuvre and genre, and ideological work in the Victorian social formation: *Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1988); "The Epic Plight of Troth in *Idylls of the King*", *English Literary History*, 58 (1991), 701-20; "Trials of Fiction: Novel and Epic in the Geraint and Enid Episodes from *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30, 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 441-61. See also Victor Kiernan, "Tennyson, King Arthur and Imperialism", in *Culture, Ideology and Politics: Essays for Eric Hobsbawm*, eds. Samuel Raphael and Gareth Stedman Jones (London, 1982), 126 - 48.

[6]Berardini, op. cit., examines the disciplinary structure *in practice* of the dramatic monologue. She pursued this theme in a paper at the 1995 MLA Conference, "The 'Muted Tongue' and the 'Feathery Change': Disciplining Philomela".

a full investigation of this theme, nor of the implications for the history of poetry as a cultural agent of the connection between these two modes of knowledge. Nonetheless, by establishing that there are connections between the imagined social and internal functioning of poetry and disciplinary techniques in some of the most influential theorists of the period, it suggests that both the complexity and scope of poetry's relation to power in the nineteenth century has been underestimated. That relation consisted of something more than the concurrent marginalisation of poetry as subjective value and incorporation as unifying bourgeois humanism, something more than poetry's development as aesthesis, and therefore as a central category of bourgeois hegemony.[7] Poetry in fact could operate at a more microscopic level of power: the level of power's *modus operandi*, rather than that of the strategic situation in which power is momentarily held.[8]

It is important to bring out that this is the implication of my research because it challenges the analyses of the power-relations of Victorian poetry and poetics in Isobel Armstrong's *Victorian Poetry: poetry, poetics and politics* in ways which are germane to

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[7]Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1990) concentrates on post-Enlightenment philosophical discourse. His analysis is, nonetheless, relevant because the aesthetic is a central concern of these poetics.

[8]Murray Krieger, ed., *The Aims of Representation: Subject/Text/History*, Irvine Studies in the Humanity, reissue (Stanford, California, California University Press, 1993) collects a number of important essays which follow Foucault in contesting the idea that literary modes of perception are independent of the structure of state control. Simon During, *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing* (London and New York, Routledge, 1992) extends this interest, attempting a study of the institution of literature in relation to power. None of this work examines the specific link between disciplinary knowledge as a mode and poetics in the nineteenth century.

the appreciation of any Victorian poem, including *Idylls of the King*.[9] Armstrong isolates an important fact about this period. Its new poetic modes are all forms of what she calls the "double poem" — one in which the same words yield two absolutely distinct enunciations. Armstrong understands the relation between these two enunciations in the terms provided by Volosinov's theory of the sign as a site of conflict. For her, this form multiplies the power-relations in discourse, superimposing expression and cultural/phenomenological analysis, engaging simultaneously and self-consciously with problems of politics, history, subjectivity and language. It is inevitably sceptical and de-constructive, undermining the authority both of the particular identities and of the modes of analysis a poem presents by pitting them against each other.[10] This fails to note that early-mid Victorian poetics theorises a normalising and panoptic relation between the entities she names as "expressive" and the "analytic" consciousnesses. These critics do not propose a poetry whose two poles are mutually questioning. Instead, to adopt Armstrong's terminology, an analytic moment structures an expressive one from within. The two sources of expressive content, the poet's sensibility and the inner experience of another, are understood consistently as a plastic raw material. They require to be surveyed and organised in a form which reveals their inner order and value. The internal politics of poetic discourse, in other words, involve a direct exertion of power upon expression, and a resistance to that power which ought to be overcome. There is therefore no dialectical interplay which acts as prelude to the unity of a higher, culturally and politically solvent discursive effect. Naturally, poems themselves may challenge this

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[9] *Victorian Poetry, poetry, poetics and politics* (London, Routledge, 1993).

[10] ibid., 10-17.

view, as Claire Berardini's analysis of Tennyson's "Rizpah" suggests.[11] Nonetheless, in poetics, while two greatly determined modes of consciousness are seen locked as the struggling poles of a single discursive utterance, they are not theorised as competing on equal terms or affecting each other symmetrically. Poetry is given the function of ordering discursive multiplicity rather than providing a level ground for its evolutionary struggles. It is therefore much more deeply imbricated in the reproduction of modern power-relations than Armstrong allows. Its dual structure is not a half-escape from, but part of a tactics of consensual — but also exclusive and effective — social control. As a result, for a poem to be seen as providing a critique of social structures at the level of power's techniques, it must become a critique of its form, rather than simply exploiting the opportunities of that form. This is in fact what *Idylls of the King* does, as we shall see in the next chapter.

It is worth mentioning one further aspect of the connection this chapter establishes between discipline and poetry, concerning the relation between discipline and the object and medium of poetic power-knowledge. This is an important question, because it shows the wider implications of a poem challenging its own epistemological form, as suggested above. It must first be noted that none of the theorists examined here overtly compare the way poetry operates and contemporary developments in the way prisons, schools, barracks, factories, hospitals or madhouses operate. The formal apparatuses of the state and its hegemonic or philanthropic adjuncts are sometimes mentioned. When this occurs, however, it is to stress that poetry is a discourse of a quite different type to any employed in these apparatuses, and possessing a power quite different in magnitude and aim to

[11]Berardini, "Tennyson and the Poetic Forms of Resistance", op. cit., 89-95.

them. Similarly, surveillance is not an issue mentioned by name. It is simply that ideas about how knowledge and power can be integrated which had their origin in the disciplinary institution come to the surface in poetics too. Disciplinary ideas arise autonomously in poetics, or rather, through connections which are not part of the poetics' conscious project.[12] In spite of this, these poetics concern some of the most critical elements of the disciplinary archipelago itself, and sketch a position for poetry which would give it a central place in any disciplinary society. For all these theorists, poetry operates upon a more profound level of subjectivity, over a longer range, and with less deliberate and overt expenditure of power than any other institution. The understanding of poetry which justifies this position would make poetry an intensification and extension of disciplinary practice. First, the field of direct manipulation poetry is supposed to constitute for knowledge and power is the inwardness and self-motivation of subjectivity. This is a field which is elsewhere occluded from discipline, but one every disciplinary institution posits as its unsurveyed condition of effectiveness. Poetry is both to transform this element and have as its project the element's total surveillance. Second, poetry is

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[12] The immediate question this raises is how these ideas migrated from discussion of institutional practice to discussion of poetry. Is there a specific route, through the reading of important theorists? Are these ideas which form the intellectual air of the Post-Enlightenment episteme, inevitably to be picked up? Is there a path through the immediate antecedents of the theory I consider — post-Kantian philosophy, utilitarian psychology, Romantic science and philology? I cannot answer such questions here. For my purposes it is only necessary to establish that there is so close a resemblance between ideas of poetry and the structure of disciplinary power-knowledge that a deep critique of poetry and a deep critique of the disciplinary institution are one and the same project. Nevertheless, there is a story to tell, and it probably involves an investigation of the power-knowledge relations of the whole late eighteenth and early nineteenth century episteme.

supposed to function in a way which re-doubles the hermeneutic and transactional structures of surveillance. Every reader and every writer of poetry is constituted both as the object and subject of a mechanism of total observation, one whose medium is the published book. As a consequence of this mechanism, poetry can survey all of subjectivity without a centralised point of observation, and without the surveyors being observable or able to avoid surveillance themselves. At the same time, these hermeneutic relations dissolve into the pervasive and everyday relation of the marketplace. ' Poetry thus becomes a regime of surveillance that is not limited by the walls of a specific institution and one educational, military, penal or productive function, but rather one which can cover the whole of society at once. It is, in other words, both a model and a limit case of the disciplinary mechanism.

There are two main reasons why this is significant for *Idylls of the King*. The poem focuses on the interaction between the most diffuse and general socio-hermeneutic frameworks and subjectivity, rather than that between subjectivity and the hermeneutic frameworks of any specific institution. It is at this level that it makes a critique of the poetic mode of being as an agent of social stability. It is at this level that it examines the relation between being watched, being an example, watching others, imitating them, and the dissemination of social norms. Understanding that the suggested function of poetry installs disciplinary technique in the basic relations of the capitalist mode of production both establishes the connection between these two themes and marks their importance. It means that *Idylls*'s self-reflexivity is not simply an interrogation of the epistemological and transactional conditions of its own value or of the autonomous cultural sphere of art. It also means that *Idylls*'s concern with reputation, sexual and otherwise, is not simply an interrogation of the conditions of personal success and self-worth in mid-Victorian

bourgeois society. It both integrates the poem and reveals that the poem interrogates the epistemological and transactional conditions of one of the basic techniques of the whole post-Enlightenment European social structure, not just of its aesthetic sphere, or of one class or one country.[13]

Let me now turn to the chronological and sociological scope of the claim I am making. Because this chapter focuses on texts which could have formed a context for Tennyson's poetic project, in particular the first instalment of *Idylls of the King*, I do not

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[13] It should be stressed, of course, that the above is not necessarily Tennyson's fully possessed intention. In the present chapter I show the emergence in poetics of a cluster of intellectual themes and proposed mechanisms not usually associated with it. It is not necessary for my argument as a whole to show that Tennyson was interested in these mechanisms or had thought about them in any other sphere than that of poetry — though there are well known biographical connections regarding up to date methods of treating the insane, and the link between poetry and madness is embedded in the very structure of his most controversial long poem. Indeed, except in this matter of insanity, neither Tennyson's poetry nor his library show any interest in disciplinary technique. This is not a difficulty for my argument because the whole disciplinary problematic emerges in considerations of poetry and history, including the question of surveillance. Tennyson need not have gone elsewhere, intellectually speaking, to have been exposed to them or to have grasped them. Moreover, he need not be aware that he is writing about a series of problems which emerge also in the techniques of mass education, military training, factory management and the penal system to write about those problems. I am suggesting, in other words, that discipline is as much a registered but incompletely avowed *condition* of the poem, as it is a theme consciously encompassed by it. However, I am also suggesting that, serendipitously, because of the way the problematic of discipline emerges in poetics and metahistory, the poem is *de facto* a critique of the conditions of discipline as a whole. The poem encompasses the disciplinary archipelago, in other words, but through an intermediary idea. The conclusions it represents about poetry and history still amount to conclusions about the basis of any disciplinary society, even if they are not intended as such.

examine poetics prior to or after the period between 1830 and 1860, nor the whole range of poetics within that period. However, it is useful both to indicate something broader and give some indication why the texts which are examined in this chapter are sufficient for my more limited purposes.

The period between 1798 and 1830 sees the establishment of expressive poetics as a major force in European culture. The present chapter examines a set of parameters on this development between 1830 and 1860, whose effect is to link poetry with the techniques of discipline. However, these parameters may have been effective before 1830. It is therefore worth pointing out summarily some relationships between the Romantic and the early-mid Victorian theory, and lines of enquiry regarding the emergence of a disciplinary poetics. Theorists in the 1830s, including Tennyson, react specifically against the poetry of the second generation Romantics rather than Wordsworth, Coleridge or Southey when articulating that a poetic consciousness is consensual. Moreover, some of them appeal to the poetry of the first generation Romantics in developing their own ideas. At the same time, a number of discussions in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's prose moot the constellation of ideas which, in these later theorists, unfold a disciplinary constitution for poetry. Both enquire into the relation between a poet's biographical emotions and those which are displayed in his/her poems. Both also suggest that poetry operates on the most private recesses of its readers' subjectivity, uses a particular style of discourse allied to that of religious story, imparts a moment of expression in each poem which is unique and indivisible, and concentrates on moments of expression which large numbers of people can come to assent with on an emotional level. It is likely, in other words, that the disciplinary poetics examined here

has its roots in Romantic speculation; and that there is some relation between the consensual parameters of expressive poetics and the precipitation of this mode.

In the 1860s and 1870s, on the other hand, poetry is recommended as part of the curriculum for the new National schools because it is seen in terms of this consensual expressive poetics. That is, Arnold and his supporters see poetry as the discourse of a certain kind of consciousness promulgating a deeply consensual experience of what it is to be human — which is not to say that this experience is thought to be conventional or, in the context of the culture of the first fifty years of Victoria's reign, hegemonic. At the same time, however, within the relatively autonomous sphere of poetry and aesthetics, a rather different positioning of poetic consciousness begins to emerge: that of the 'aesthetic' or 'avant-garde'. Notions of the autonomy, the unreproducibleness, the simple perversity or pure formality of the experiences retailed in poetry (and of their value) replace the notion of the consensual. This poetics becomes increasingly important over the next fifty years, particularly after the study of poetry becomes a discipline within academe. There is some question whether this poetics remains disciplinary: do these ideas indicate that poetry is no longer attached to a normative grid for behaviour, or simply to different, anti-establishment norms? It is not the task of this thesis to more than indicate this bifurcation, and the possible dilution, mutation or curtailment of the disciplinary constitution of poetic power-knowledge. However, it is worth pointing out two things. The poetics which concern the 1859 *Idylls* remain culturally relevant, since it is this "older" theory which informs the use of poetry within the disciplinary institutional framework of national education. Nonetheless, both elements of this bifurcation suggest a retreat from the vision of poetry as a socialising apparatus co-extensive with the whole social structure. It withdraws either into the classroom (a specialized institution) or the

reading of a self-defining coterie. In other words, it is likely that the vision of poetry as an autonomous disciplinary mechanism is confined to the period I am considering.

Within that period (1830 - 1860), this chapter concentrates on critics whose ideas have a special relation to Tennyson and the development of his poetic career. The first group of texts considered emerge in the early 1830s, from the pens of Arthur Hallam, John Stuart Mill, Henry Taylor, "Christopher North" and William Henry Fox. Despite their differing emphases, technical/structural insights, cultural objectives and journalistic experience, all of these critics set up poetry in terms of a post-Romantic expressive problematic. That is, their theoretical point of reference, the testing ground to which they appeal, is the practice of first or second generation Romantic poetry. Their theory proceeds from certain reservations about the actual achievement of that poetry, or perceived misunderstanding amongst the theorists' intended readers about its aims. These theorists set the agenda of poetic criticism in the major middle-class journals for the next thirty years. Their problematic concerns the success of Romantic poetry's attempted reconciliation between a fully expressive, mimetic and imaginative poetry, a poetry accessible enough to reach society as a whole and one aesthetically, psychologically and epistemologically refined enough to change society for the better. Their arguments concern the nature of poetry's refinement, the roots of its accessibility and the precise status of what, in the poet, is actually expressed in poetry. They result in the statement of a variety of types of poetry, with corresponding structures of personality and relation to social consensus for the poet. This writing is important for understanding *Idylls of the King* for a number of reasons. Within the group, response to Tennyson's first two volumes is a major point of departure, helping to define or confirm ideas of the development from Romantic practice. Tennyson's own development after 1832, on the

other hand, is effectively and admittedly a continuous experiment in forging a poetry which succeeds on the terms they work out.[14] They thus reveal part of the problematic taken on by Tennyson's decision to write an Arthurian story. Moreover, as part of its investigation of surveillance and social activity, the poem specifically explores the ad-hoc typology of associated personality traits, hermeneutic and ethical practices and practices of the self these theorists lay out.

The criticism of the 1830s, however, is not on its own a sufficient context for a poem written at least twenty five years later. We need some sense of how these ideas were developed in actual periodical criticism, and also of other schools of criticism Tennyson's practice engages during the thirty years before the release of *Idylls*. Three other critical discussions are therefore examined in some detail. The first of these is the periodical criticism of Aubrey de Vere and Coventry Patmore. There are two general reasons why these critics are relevant, and also reasons specific to *Idylls*. On the one

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[14] Tennyson's work in the 10 years between 1832 and 1842 is driven partly by the desire to perfect the art of poems already written, partly by a change of direction signalled by Tennyson's agreement in principle with Henry Taylor's "Preface" to *Philip van Artevelde* (Letter to James Spedding, October 1834 in Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., eds., *The Letters of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, vol. I [Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987], 120), his written apology to Christopher North (Letter to John Wilson, 26th April, 1834, Lang and Shannon, op. cit., 1, 109) and reluctance to be reviewed by John Stuart Mill in 1835. The major works after that period in their various ways attempt to sustain a poetry of lyric sophistication, high seriousness and expressive power with the addition of the populist interest of narrative, however distorted. The poems' subject matter is always surrounded by anxiety about its acceptability to a general readership — particularly with *Idylls*, which by Tennyson's own account was delayed for nearly two decades through a doubt that he could bring Arthurian matter before the public in a way which would strike them with any impact (cited in Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson*, 2nd, ed., (London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1989), 250.

hand, they partake, with Henry Taylor, Hermann Merivale, Hartley Coleridge, John Sterling and others, in the elaboration of a specifically conservative and traditionary expressive poetics in the two major periodicals in the 30s, 40s and 50s. They do this with some comprehensiveness, and some sophistication about the phenomenological structure of poetry. On the other hand, their ideas are a theoretical validation of their own poetic practice as one way of reconciling the problem of post-Romantic expressivism (both critics moralise Hallam, for instance). This practice is close to (but not identical with) the direction of Tennyson's own work.[15] Tennyson was also in close personal contact with both critics. Their work is, in other words, at once culturally significant, linked to contemporary aesthetic practice, and in illuminating proximity with Tennyson's own discursive, social and cultural trajectory. It is specifically relevant to *Idylls of the King* in outlining typical identities associated with poetry which are also understood as ways of acting in the world in general. These modes of identity and their corresponding praxes are interrogated by the poem.

Another strain of poetics in this period important to a discussion of *Idylls of the King* is what Isobel Armstrong has identified as the poetics of pathological expressiveness. The notion that poetry is a kind of psycho-therapeutic symptom, the overflow in symbolic form of a great emotional pressure, both informs the structure of

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[15]Like Taylor and Hartley Coleridge, both use Byron as a stalking horse to differentiate a certain kind of feeling as wrong in poetry (see fn. 89) — Tennyson does not wholly reject the Byronic extremity of feeling, the borderline rational (Letter to James Spedding, October 1834, op. cit., 120). Both also explicitly link the feelings/insights which are thought to be legitimate in poetry to an external, traditionally religious but also hegemonic measure of states of consciousness ("keeping"/"law"). Tennyson was chary of these connections, as *In Memoriam* shows, and differed from both men on their Roman Catholicism.

Tennyson's two major poems before *Idylls*, and has biographical importance for him in the light of Arthur Hallam's death.[16] The three statements of this poetics which I examine establish its broad significance in middle class culture and also all have recorded connections to Tennyson personally.[17] In John Keble's Tractarian version it is the theoretical rationale for his highly popular mode of poetry in the 1830s to 1850s — a mode which was moreover perceived to have taken poetry as a technique of discourse and acculturation into fractions of society which historically had resisted it. In David Masson's liberal version it is one of the major inputs for Matthew Arnold's poetics. As a whole this poetics also provides another typological structure of personal practice which is explored in *Idylls of the King* — particularly in the most ideologically significant variant, Keble's. It is therefore a necessary part of any understanding of the intellectual context of *Idylls of the King*.

There is one other strand of poetics which must be examined, the mode David Shaw has called the oracular mode. Though he distinguishes this mode from expressive poetics, this is in broad terms still an expressive, mimetic and imaginative poetics. Poetry

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[16] *In Memoriam* problematizes the relationship between poetry and the biographical impulse to expression, questioning whether the latter can be the origin of a poetry which has any public worth. *Maud*, as befits a poem written in the wake of Spasmodic achievement, makes the pathology of this poetics a central issue by highlighting the permeable boundary of poetic insight and insanity at the same time as it highlights the expressiveness of a proud (and therefore publicly silent) but intensely sensitized consciousness. Both poems also touch on the relation of the products of the pathologically driven expressive consciousness to collective, public ideological projects.

[17] Tennyson had Keble's *Praelectiones* in its original Latin form in his library, and read the *North British Review* (as well as knowing its editor, Patmore).

is seen as retailing insights into the ultimate condition and destiny of humankind which the poet possesses and understands personally, and which are communicated by representing a verisimilitudinous virtual reality. I make reference to this poetics in the version of it disseminated by Thomas Carlyle. There are a number of reasons for choosing him as representative of the mode. As a part of his general philosophical position, Carlyle's poetics are influential in the period between 1830 and 1860. They are for instance an important element in the criticism of the *Westminster Review* (which I do not separately examine), and can be traced directly in periodical criticism of *Idylls of the King* itself. Carlyle is also close, intellectually, politically and personally, to Tennyson: and his own reaction to *Idylls of the King* suggestive. Finally, Carlyle's poetics are closely related to the underlying ideas of his metahistory, and therefore form a good point of comparison between poetry and the other variant of power-knowledge germane to Arthurian discourse. This is particularly important in the case of *Idylls of the King*, as the hermeneutic and ethical practices associated with the Carlylean historian and poet are critical elements in the poem's representation of King Arthur himself.

What major theoretical statements between 1830 and 1860 are not covered in the foregoing? It should first be acknowledged that there is no specific consideration of working-class criticism or women's criticism. This is not because these issues are unimportant in consideration of Victorian culture as a whole, but because they are not specifically relevant to my concern with *Idylls of the King*. Contemporary scholarship has revealed that there are interesting differences of emphasis in proletarian and female poetics as compared with bourgeois male poetics. These differences of emphasis, however, do not concern the expressive and consensual theoretical orientation of the latter, only its gendered and class-oriented notion of what the consensual is and what

expressive power is.[18] It is important to remark this because, as we shall see, one of the noteworthy aspects of *Idylls of the King* is the way it examines issues of the poetic self both in female and male figures. However, the poem does not make any significant differentiation between the hermeneutic and expressive principles at stake in the activity of either gender. The female characters, like the male characters, are constituted in this poem by issues which are fundamental to the dominant expressive and consensual poetics as a whole.[19] It is not necessary, in other words, to examine female poetics in detail to understand in their own terms what issues the poem tackles.

The same can be said of certain influential male writers of the 1840s and 1850s — Browning and Arnold. On the one hand, they articulate ideas which I consider elsewhere; on the other they are concerned with a kind of poetry or art which is not strictly of relevance to *Idylls of the King*. Browning's theory reflects the different emphasis of his resolution of the post Romantic problematic — the multiplication of individual dramatic

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[18] It should be recalled, however, that there are interesting strands in bourgeois criticism too, relating to the reading of poetry by the lower classes, which complicate the notion of what "class-oriented" means for middle-class critics as a group. I argue later that what is at stake in the latter is that the class interests of the latter are loosened in poetry, because poetry concerns a longer term hegemony than immediate politics, in which it is recognised that middle-class standards might change as well as it being intended that working class ones will.

[19] Note, however, that there are interesting questions concerning Elaine's place as a critique of the whole mode of expressivism. Armstrong has noted that the theorisation of women's poetry allied it with a much more immediate relation between personal feeling and poetry than was typical for male theory — one in other words much closer to the Romantic formulation (*Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics, Politics*, op. cit., 318-77).

consciousnesses in structurally lyric format, rather than the synthesizing of lyric into extended but unified narratives. More specifically, the two modes of identity he isolates for the poet — the highly lyricized and personal Shelleyan poet against the highly mimetic and depersonalised Shakespearian — are not constitutions of personality *Idylls of the King* explores. Similarly, Arnold's critical emphases in the 1850s are unhelpful in attempting to understand Tennyson. Except in deprecating one style of poetic language and promoting another as an index of the poetic constitution, Arnold is not concerned with the display of poetic knowledge nor with the identity of the poet. More importantly, he directs polemic in favour of tragic or epic literature, and in favour of a particular notion of poetic closure. Except at the highest transactional level — Tennyson's very composition of poems in his own mode — these strictures are of no relevance for us. Tennyson's Arthurian work is a collection of idylls, their mode of closure, as we shall see, that of a tantalising suspension of closure.[20]

There is one other male theorist whose work needs to be glanced at here, not a theorist of poetry (except in a minor way) but a theorist of painting, architecture and the mode of production of art in general — John Ruskin. Ruskin's initial definitions of art in the 1840s correspond very closely with the disciplinary structures of thinking I am concerned to draw out. In the 1850s, however, as Ruskin becomes interested in the problem of the social conditions under which art must be created, his theory begins to

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[20] This does not mean that Browning and Arnold's theories avoid constituting poetry according to a disciplinary model. It simply means that the particular interests of these two critics of the 1850s within that model are not taken on by Tennyson. In fact, both Browning's and Arnold's poetics do not break fundamentally with the disciplinary, though there is no space to make the arguments here.

valorize a represented and representing consciousness which cannot resolve itself into a disciplinary form. The theme is flagged in the well-known chapter on "The Pathetic Fallacy", though still in a hierarchy of artistic achievement which identifies a disciplined consciousness as the creator of the best art. In Ruskin's discussions of Gothic, and the Gothic Grotesque, however, this hierarchy is suspended. This is important, both because Tennyson read "The Nature of Gothic" in the 1850s, when the composition of *Idylls of the King* began in earnest, and because the epistemological structure which Tennyson creates for *Idylls* as an instance of poetry in general entails a similar, valorised failure to achieve disciplinary structures of consciousness. However, the subjectivity which Tennyson constructs for the poem's narration and reading is not identical with that of Ruskin's Grotesque artist, and Tennyson neither explores the grotesque consciousness specifically in *Idylls* nor the grotesque style.[21] Nonetheless, it is worth pointing out that an exploration and partial rejection of the standards of the disciplinary model is common to both writers.

Poetry and the Condition of Disciplinary Power

In the next pages I propose to examine the relations between discipline and the structures of power and knowledge in Victorian poetics in the four relationships I isolated

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[21] That Tennyson aims for something different is corroborated by Walter Bagehot's differentiation of Tennyson in 1864 as an "ornate" rather than "pure" or "grotesque" poet (Walter Bagehot, "Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning; or, Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry", *National Review*, n. s. 1 [November 1864], 27 - 66). It should be borne in mind, however, that Bagehot's well-known review is outside the scope of this thesis, and also, unlike Ruskin, promulgates a conservative, typological measure of the Grotesque.

at the beginning of the chapter. I will examine by turn the kinds of effect poetry is thought to have on readers; the question of the revelation of the poet's self; the object of poetic knowledge and the knowledge assumed in the representation of that knowledge. The chapter will then proceed, as did the examination of historiography, to sum up the practice of the self associated with poetic discipline and indicate what the construction of poetic knowledge means for Arthurian discourse.

The first relations to be examined here are those which emerge in discussions of the way poetry can affect its readers. There are two aspects to consider: the type of effect poetry seeks, and the type of person it is supposed to affect. For both elements, there are analogies with disciplinary processes. The form of power poetry is thought to exert posits a subjectivity for the reader which is identical to the subjectivity discipline posits for its addressees. At the same time, that form of power exerts a type of influence many of whose salient elements are identical to those of discipline. It will be necessary first to explain the aspects of disciplinary power that are involved.

The mechanisms of surveillance — the particular relationships and activities through which it seeks to direct people — posit a particular form of subjectivity in those over whom power is deployed.[22] I mean two things by this. On the one hand, these

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[22] One of the principles of disciplinary power — part of what distinguishes it from other mechanisms through which hierarchies of power flow — is the aim of a profound inner transformation in the creature subjected to it. Discipline is not an exercise of power upon *one* subject which seeks to make *other subjects witnessing* the exercise *fear and obey* its *possessors*. Rather it is an exercise of power upon *many* subjects which seeks to make *them and only them internalise and close with the aims and desires* its *stewards* have for their behaviour. In other words, it seeks among other things directly to manipulate the structures of

mechanisms interpellate a form of subjectivity in Althusser's sense, establishing a series of relationships for the subject which render the appearance of this subjectivity mandatory. On the other hand, discipline depends upon the existence of this form of subjectivity in those it seeks to transform. It requires that subjectivity as an anchor for its own manipulations of the subject — in other words, that subjectivity is an element in the disciplinary mechanism itself.

What is this subjectivity? Its structure must be such as to allow the transformation of its patterns through those agencies, and those agencies alone, which discipline brings into play. The first elements to consider are those which are the condition of discipline as a practice which claims both to alter a specific subject's moral compass, and for the subject still to read by this compass when no longer directly addressed by disciplinary power. This implies that each subject is addressed individually. It also implies a particular kind of relation between the internal patterning of the subject and the environment through which it moves. On the one hand, the subject must possess a

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personality which determine the subject's agency. In some respects, the concept of discipline is very close to that of certain analyses of the objective of ideology. Neither disciplinary power nor ideology are mechanisms which intervene upon bodies with physical violence or which seek to leave their subjects with any sense of being coerced. Both attempt to form the cognitive matrix through which the subject interprets his or her world, and to stimulate and direct the subject's desires within that perceived world. However, discipline and ideology operate at different sociological levels. The former is a single micropolitical function, at work within many institutions and many distributions of power, for whom these objectives are a defining technical style. The latter, contrariwise, is a macro-political result, one of whose side-effects is to occlude the realities of coercion: it is a structure of representation which proceeds from many socialising agencies and whose purpose is to reproduce but one distribution of power.

cognitive framework for interpreting its environment and an associated framework for acting within it which is autonomous with respect to that environment: i.e. not the mirror of what it sees. On the other hand, it must possess a principle of self-determination which is not tied to these frameworks — it can at any moment ignore them and act wholly outside them. In other words, it entails a subject whose interiority is the origin of its behaviour. At the same time, however, the subject's interiority must be susceptible to its environment. Both the cognitive and moral frameworks it possesses, and its self-determination, can be transformed in their depths by encounters with what is outside it.

The second element of the structure of subjectivity posited by discipline results from the mode by which discipline transforms subjectivity. Discipline encapsulates the desired behavioural matrix in a series of simple norms, and confines the subject in an environment where it is constantly measured against those norms and subjected to mild rewards or punishments as it meets or fails to meet them. The result of these agencies is the subject's internalisation of the code of norms, so that it carries out the code's standards even when it is not actually being watched. In this regime, subjects do not conform merely because they exercise a rational desire to escape pain and make the best of their confined lot. On the contrary, their transformation must be such that they come to love the standards they are measured against, and anchor their identity on them even when confinement as well as surveillance ceases. Discipline therefore involves two other processes. One is that the subject independently observes those who have authority over it, becoming impressed by their behaviour to the point of wanting to imitate them. The second is that the norms of discipline must somehow be attractive on their own terms, appearing to harbour a capability that benefits or pleases the subject of discipline, rather than being merely a yoke restricting its freedom.

What does this imply about the general structure of the subject? Not only is it individual, autonomous and transformable, it is one in which transformation simultaneously involves a multiplicity of faculties in the subject. It is a subject whose interiority is a structure of physical and emotional as well as rational experience, and which exists as a complex and centred whole. Second, it is a subject which, to a large extent, by virtue of its positive engagement with the environment it finds itself in, transforms itself. Third, it is a subject which is transformed in this way not by focusing on what not to do, but on pleasure and activity which can be construed as gain. Finally, it is a subject which is infinitely malleable in these terms, always striving to correct itself, or always needing correction, against standards which exist outside itself as well as in its interiority and which do not themselves necessarily remain constant.

Middle-class poetics in the period between 1830 and 1860 broaches this subjectivity in a number of ways. It does so in response to a crisis of prestige felt from the 1820s up to as late as the mid-1840s. Utilitarian-influenced critics — including, among others, Macaulay — opined that poetry was worthless, or a "primitive" mode of thought inevitably in decline as Reason "unw[o]ve the rainbow".[23] Conservative writers lamented the prurient level of interest in and achievement of contemporary poetry.[24]

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[23]John Keats, "Lamia", Part II, l. 237. T. B. Macaulay, "Milton", *Critical and Historical Essays*, op. cit., I. 153-56. Bryan Proctor, "Poetry — Cunningham's Songs", *Edinburgh Review*, 47 (January 1828), 184-204 discusses this question in relation to the competing claims of history and philosophy. See M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, op. cit., 300-12; and Alan Sinfield, *Alfred Tennyson*, op. cit., 11-21 for different historical discussions of this point.

[24] Henry Taylor, Preface to *Philip van Artevelde* (London, 1833).

Well into the fifties, a different but equally disabling analysis observed, as Arnold *fils* put it, that the "bewildering confusion" of the conditions of modern life scuppered any chance of really great or "classic" poetry being written.[25] The response to this crisis elaborates certain traditional ideas of the form of discursive power poetry wields — its relation to ethics, pedagogy and the rhetoric of logical proof. It is in this elaboration that notions of subjectivity and power appear which duplicate those of discipline. In particular, poetry achieves the combination of social and subjective effects it does because (a) it manipulates the subject's cognitive framework (b) it evokes the whole interior structure of the subject (c) it surrounds the subject with a discursive experience of normative behaviour whose principles are pleasure and attraction, rather than a rhetoric of restriction (d) it expects the subject to be drawn into an engagement with the consciousness of poetic discourse whereby it transforms itself.

I shall examine three recurrent questions posed in early-mid Victorian critical texts which connect these matters. How may poetry be justified as a form of writing relatively autonomous of plain economic, moral or social utility? Secondarily, how does poetry relate to the promulgation of religious and political doctrine, and to the communication of class experience alien to the readership? Discussion of these questions negotiates one stark conundrum. Poetry is a discourse which neither self-interest nor legal and social coercion force readers to attend to. If it is to reassert its authority it must discover a forcefulness which does not require the institutional or economic mechanisms of reward which empower a judge's, legislator's, priest's, scientist's, teacher's, journalist's, or even a

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[25]Matthew Arnold, "Preface to First Edition of *Poems* (1853)", in Matthew Arnold, *Selected Prose*, ed. P. J. Keating (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1970), 54.

historian's words. This is why poetics reaches toward notions which echo those of discipline. Poetry cannot gain a hold by denying subjects expression, demanding that they fulfil an obligation, or requiring them to articulate their commitment to a proposition or group. It may only gain a hold by tapping a capability within them, drawing it out, developing it and training it. In the texts this capability and direction is understood via a more or less sophisticated appeal to associationist psychology and a post-Kantian division of the contents of consciousness into separate faculties. Poetry pleasures the capillary network of "association" which joins together all a subject's experiences. It attains social efficacy — in two ways — because this appeal travels throughout the subject's associative network. It renders cognition more inclusive and flexible by clearing the paths between emotional, intellectual, sensory and linguistic consciousness. It manipulates the content of these pathways, forging connections between doctrinal commitment and experiences which go deep in the memory, body and relationships with others. Since such pathways comprise the structure of personality, poetry may thus tend the very conditions of behaviour themselves.

Poetry and Emotional Power

Let us begin by summarizing some direct formulations of the above positions. As we do so, let us also note an important subsidiary point. These theorists seek to attach poetry to a variety of bourgeois political stances and a variety of relationships to hegemonic values. All do so, however, by trying to see their ultimate political aims as especially compatible with the ways of a human subjectivity whose structure is open to

being disciplined.[26] William Fox, Arthur Hallam and J. S. Mill illustrate two main ways in which poetry is seen as attracting and drawing out the subject. Poetry is a discourse of "pleasure" or of "beauty", at its best evoking the whole breadth of consciousness.[27] "It tasks the senses, the fancy, the feelings, and the intellect, and employs the best powers of all in one rich ministry of pleasure."[28] Its "predominant motive" is "the desire of beauty", "images" conjoining a "rich ... and ample" physical consciousness to "exquisite [sentiments]" and "active trains of thought".[29] "The direct aim of art, as such, is the production of beauty": its great achievements fuse "associations" between "sensuous imagery", "thoughts" and "feelings".[30] For each theorist, this consenting exercise of the faculties is explicitly opposed to ethically directive discourse with powers to drive

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[26]It may therefore be suggested that the disciplinary technique is bound tightly to a hegemonizing take-over of poetry. I do not propose to enter this argument, as for my purposes it is only necessary to establish that this technique was theorised at all in criticism relevant to Tennyson. Against such a suggestion one might, however, cite Paul Murphy's research on poetics in working-class periodicals in these years. These retained the notion of poetry as revolutionary vision much longer than their middle-class compeers. One might also cite "The Village Patriarch" (*Westminster Review*, (July 1829), 92-96) for a disciplinary poetics not bound to bourgeois mistrust of oppositional expression.

[27]See Lawrence Starzyck, *The Imprisoned Splendor*, op. cit., for a book length exploration of this theme.

[28]W. J. Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", *Westminster Review*, (January 1830), 5.

[29]A. H. Hallam, "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry", *Englishman's Magazine*, 1 (August 1831), in Isobel Armstrong, ed., *Victorian Scrutinies*, op. cit., 85, 87-8.

[30]J. S. Mill, "What is Poetry?" and "The Two Kinds of Poetry", *Monthly Repository*, n.s. 7 (January and October 1833), in *The Collected Works of J. S. Mill*, vol. I, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto and Buffalo, 1974), 353, 357. (The remark about beauty was not reprinted in the amalgamation of these essays as "Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties" in 1867).

subjects: to the work of "politicians" and "philosophers", to the "logical battery" of "acute or profound" ideas, and to religious or political "oratory".[31] For each, too, precisely because it electrifies the whole circuit of the mind, poetry accomplishes political effects of a depth and permanence these more strictly "useful" or "moral" discourses cannot. Its five-barrelled gratification of being, says Fox, gives immediately the utopian experience others promise only "in the remote consequences of their exertions".[32] It is also available to manipulate "associations" and make notions of "tyrants" and "martyrs" the ground of a progressive "national" ideology.[33] For Hallam, poetry's "multiplied ... minute ... diversified [impressions]" bequeath a "profound observation of Nature" whose "knowledge and power" outlives even "custom" as a structuring force of mass "national existence".[34] Mill, meanwhile, notes that poetry affects "the desires and characters of mankind through their emotions". It directs them to a "perfection of their nature" whose conjunct is "breaking up old modes of belief".[35] In each case, in other words, poetry becomes identified with a mode of discursive power whose site and mode of operation matches that of discipline. Poetry evokes a subjectivity which is understood as the subject's individually, as a complex emotional, intellectual and sensory whole, and as the motor of human behaviour. It seeks to transform the whole structure of the internal relations of this subjectivity. Finally, the method of transformation it adopts avoids

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[31]Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 5; Hallam, op. cit., 86; Mill, "What is Poetry?", op. cit., 348-53.

[32]Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 5.

[33]W. J. Fox, "Tennyson's *Poems*", *Westminster Review*, 14 (January 1831), 223-4.

[34]Hallam, op. cit., 88, 90-1.

[35]J. S. Mill, "Tennyson's *Poems*", *The Collected Works of J. S. Mill*, vol. I, op.cit., 414.

anything which may appear in the light of a restriction of subjectivity's free desire, offering instead an experience which is pleasurable or attractive, and empowering.

Conservative critics, less welcoming of experiment, nonetheless theorise poetry's mode and site of authority in the same way. Let us note the ideas of three poet-critics who wrote extensively in "widely circulating" journals. The reactionary Henry Taylor, who attacked Hallam's favoured poetry of sensation in 1833, preferring a didacticism alien to all three of the theorists we have just examined, still understood poetry as a culturally proper handling of pleasure. It avoids the "evil" social effect of Byron and Shelley by satisfying the "sentient" faculties at the same time as it "instructs", reconciling the "attractive graces and charms" of "feeling" and "beauty" to "sound understanding ... just judgements".[36] In the forties, Aubrey de Vere, whose conservatism had oppositional traits and who knew Browning, Tennyson and Taylor, also allowed poetry a much clearer instructive function than the critics above.[37] Yet like them he saw it as "elevat[ing]"

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[36]These ideas are a combination of the moral and psychological precepts ensured by "general intellectual cultivation." (Henry Taylor, "Preface to Philip van Artevelde" (London 1833), xi-ii, xvii, xx). Tennyson voiced qualified agreement with Taylor. (See his letter to James Spedding, October 1834, in Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon, Jr., eds., *The Letters of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, vol. 1 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), 120.)

[37]It "elevates" without "transcending" Nature. Aubrey de Vere, "Landor's Poetry", *Edinburgh Review*, 91 (April 1850), 412. de Vere became Roman Catholic in 1851 and criticised English rule in Ireland after the Great Famine (*Dictionary of National Biography*, 2nd Supplement, vol. 1.2 [London, Smith and Elder, 1912], 493).

because it "elicits the beautiful from common things".[38] Poetry's "purpose" is to "excite, in the minds of [the] audience, ... pleasing emotions", to teach by "attractive example". It is "most worthy of its high rank" when it "seeks to please through the excitement of manly emotions and widely-reaching sympathies, and of emotions and sympathies of whose evolution energetic activity of intellect is a necessary condition". It therefore associated "delight" at once with the "solidities of the earth" and "the ideal perfections of the world beyond". Exercising consciousness as a whole it "flourishes and declines in conjunction with that moral, political, and spiritual well-being [in society] which it helps to sustain".[39] In the fifties, Coventry Patmore, a vehement patriot, another quondam intimate of Tennyson and another eventual Catholic convert, also equated poetry with a value-saturated conception of the attractive. Art is a product of the artist's "eye to behold beauty; [and his/her] heart to love, and to desire that others should love it".[40] "All beauty", however, is "*life expressed in law*" [Patmore's italics], and therefore essentially religious.[41] This religious art possesses a "peculiar and far more effective method of teaching" than the "avowedly didactic". This is the use of "Forms" which, by the "laws of

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[38]Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", *Edinburgh Review*, (April 1849), 363. Cf. also, William Spalding, "Sir E. Bulwer Lytton: *King Arthur*", *Edinburgh Review*, 83 (July 1849), 207.

[39]"Tennyson's *Princess*", *Edinburgh Review*, 90 (October 1849), 409-10. This well-being is defined conventionally in terms of national expansion, religious faith, and anti-hedonistic moral practice. Poetry fades in periods of "corrupt sense", "despotism unsupported by moral sense", "barbarism" and "superstition" associated with post-Alexandrine Greece and the late Roman Empire ("Tennyson's *Princess*", 407-8).

[40]Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Poems — The Princess*", *North British Review*, 9 (May 1849), 54.

[41]Coventry Patmore, "*In Memoriam*", *North British Review*, 13 (August 1850), 533.

association", are "suggestive" of "ideas".[42] This suggestiveness allows us to learn "the hand-writing of the Creator", "re-liv[ing]" emotional experience with the additional rational and sensory "interpretation" and framework of "thought" attained thereby.[43] In all of these critics, we see the same moves as in Hallam, Mill and Fox. Poetry attains discursive authority because it provides a form of delight whose experience comprehends and extrapolates every cognitive power the subject possesses. It serves political functions by adding particular affiliations to a pre-existing associative structure of personality — in all these men, deeply conservative affiliations.[44] Once again, in other words, poetry is a disciplinary process. The critics posit poetry's object of power as a malleable affective, rational and sensual interiority, profoundly susceptible to a pleasing experience which enlists its own agency in its transformation.

The major technical handicap for this mode is the tension between what is pleasurable or beautiful in the present state of a reader's associations and the state the poet wishes to transform them into. The problem is confronted in various ways by all the theorists we have mentioned, some chivvying the reader, some the poet, to make

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[42]Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Poems — The Princess*", *North British Review*, 9 (May 1849), 49-57.

[43]Coventry Patmore, "Poetry — The Spasmodists", *North British Review*, 28 (February 1858), 231-2.

[44]Such statements may also be found outside circles of criticism which have close association with Tennyson, and across the political board. The radical sympathiser Leigh Hunt, in "An Answer to the Question What is Poetry?", *Imagination and Fancy* (London, 1844), insists on poetry as a "passion for power" over readers, but a power of which "delightfulness" is the arm. The later *Times* journalist E. S. Dallas analyses poetry as a form of consciousness. It is "imaginative pleasure", which he defines as "harmonious" mental activity. As such it bolsters "faith" and "the pillars and arches of society" (*Poetics*, [London 1852], 22-3, 51-60).

allowance for the difference between conventional and poetic consciousness.[45] For our purposes, the most interesting consideration of these themes arises in discussions of dogma or alien class-experience in poetry. They lead to the elaboration of specific discursive techniques allowing poetry to function at a disciplinary level. These emphasize three things about the experience of poetry: the absence within it of the discursive equivalent of coercion, a corresponding drawing of the reader into active and individualised engagement with individual poetic discourses, and the maintenance nonetheless within each poetic discourse of a normalising discursive environment.

Keble gives an early treatment (influential throughout our period) of the problem of dogma in verse, prompted by the difficulties religious verse faces in an indifferent book-market. Keble's problem is that dogmatic assertion, the overt announcement of a "good" theme, halts discourse at an existentially shallow level.[46] Sacred poetry's project, however, is to win readers' hearts, or aid the already converted to a deeper internalisation of religious discourse.[47] He proposes that this be done indirectly. One may lyrically record the various postures of the pious mind in its everyday response to nature and

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[45]See, for instance, William Spalding's statement that a "compact" exists between poet and reader, with the former allowed to represent what is not "real" in return for the "excitement" of "pleasing "emotions". Discussions about the relation between what the reader is used to and what poetry gives also occur in Mill, "The Two Kinds of Poet", op. cit., 359-60; "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 399, 403; Hallam, op. cit., 89; Patmore, "Tennyson's *Poems — The Princess*", op. cit., 50; Sara Coleridge, "Tennyson's *The Princess*", *Quarterly Review*, 82 (March 1848), 438; and Herman Merivale, "Southey's *Poetical Works*", *Edinburgh Review*, 68 (January 1839), 373-4; regarding both the reader's and the poet's need to adapt.

[46]John Keble, "Sacred Poetry", *Quarterly Review*, 32 (January 1824), 228.

human life.[48] Alternately, one uses the style of compacted, evanescent, allegorical suggestiveness perfected by Spenser.[49] In both styles, doctrinal analogies infest verse, but in capsule or undeveloped form. They are a penumbra of hidden ideological associations the curious or the motivated may follow out, and the uninitiated be simply exposed (rather than rudely awakened) to. Patmore, Hallam, and de Vere take up these points. Each theorises good poetry as a mode of language in which moral saws are thrown off casually, as part of the poet's associative matrix, or hidden as latent elements in discourse.[50] Either way, other qualities of verse — what Patmore calls its "superficial attractions" — serve as a bait, drawing readers into a voluntary exploration of doctrine at a level of existential complexity they are otherwise excluded from.[51] At the same time as maintaining a particular type of subjectivity as poetry's site of operation and pleasure as its mode of affecting subjectivity, consideration of dogma thus stresses three other

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[47]ibid., 224.

[48]ibid., 217-18, 221.

[49]ibid., 225-7.

[50]Hallam, op. cit., 93; Alexander Smith, "The Philosophy of Poetry", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*", 38 (December 1835), 827-39; Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 399-400; Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Poems — The Princess*", op. cit., 49-51.

[51]Keble develops the specifically religious dimension of this linguistic technique in Tract 89. A number of critics have examined the connection between Tractarian religious symbolic theory and poetics. See e.g. W. David Shaw, *The Lucid Veil,* op. cit., 189 - 98. G. B. Tennyson, *Victorian Devotional Poetry: The Tractarian Mode* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981) is the most comprehensive study of Keble's contribution to poetry. My concern here, however, is not the religious content of typology but its function as an element of a technique of discursive "discipline". It is in this sense that the other critics I mention are connected to Keble. (de Vere, for instance, develops his ideas in the context of arguments about allegory.)

elements linking poetry with discipline. Poetry is a discursive experience of normality — a cognitive environment filled with standards and measures — but one in which the subject is not confronted with anything antagonising it, and in which the subject itself does the work of internalisation. Drawn by sympathy with an attractive emotive state, or the metaphorical or rhythmic pleasures of poetry as discourse, the subject of poetry absorbs moral norms, but without any experience of conflict and by virtue of his or her individual engagement with discourse.

The same problem is approached in an article about political verse by Henry Taylor. The general attitude of middle class critics to political verse is summed up by the political economist Hermann Merivale's attack in the *Edinburgh Review* on Southey's conception of the post of Poet-Laureate. Poetry, he says, "forms no part of the general police establishment of the empire" — even where this apparatus recognizes and maintains it, as it does the Laureateship.[52] It is not "a sort of poetical pulpit" properly fulfilled by versified reproductions of legal and military discourse.[53] On the face of it, Taylor's publication and analysis of Wordsworth's "Sonnets Upon the Punishment of Death" in the rival *Quarterly Review* in 1841 would seem to contradict this view: the sonnets are a direct response to changes in penal legislation in the second half of the 1830s. However, the article in fact shows that poetry may legitimately intervene in

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[52]"Southey's *Poetical Works*", op. cit., 368 - 9.

[53]Southey's laureate work consists of "paraphrases of the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, the proclamation against vice and immorality, and the greater part of the gazettes of the last war; with a running commentary of anathema against all such as contravened the former and undervalued the latter" (ibid., 378 - 9).

politics, but only in the mode of knowledge and power we have already identified.[54] They are legitimate, in Taylor's view, for two reasons. The death penalty, he says, being "a subject for deep feelings, large views, and high argumentation" is "essentially a subject for poetry". Moreover, Wordsworth's intervention is pitched at the conditions of debate on this subject decades ahead.[55] Taylor's analysis hollows out a more overt poetic style than Keble — one which can lay out even syllogisms, though in abrupt form — but it never rests with mere rationalism. In fact, it appeals simultaneously to emotion, empathic projection, sensory feeling and argument, connecting logic to a diffuse and thoroughgoing ground of prejudice in the way Taylor argued for a decade earlier. Though unusual in its subject, it succeeds on the same disciplinary site of normalised pleasure, autonomous deep subjectivity, and associational bait as any other poetry.[56]

The question of disparate class-consciousness is a subset of the problem of the experience of antagonism in discourse.[57] Critics resolve it by adhering to the notions

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[54]Henry Taylor, "Wordsworth's *Sonnets*", *Quarterly Review*, 69 (June 1841), 1-51.

[55]ibid., 41.

[56]ibid., 41-8. Compare de Vere on "poetic logic", an element of style which for him covers an emotional as well as logical sense of movement to closure, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 371. In the final sonnet of the series, Wordsworth himself anticipates these points, suggesting that the "chains" of "formal" political discussion are "relax[ed]" for poets, only for their "Imagination" and "heart" to "sustain [Reason]" and "serv[e] Truth" all the "more strongly".

[57] Discussion of the way non-middle class poetry affects middle-class readers forms a small but significant strand of argument about poetry. Middle-class taste in this period rejects the popular poetry of the contemporary proletariat — if it recognises its existence at all (e.g. John Wilson, "An Hour's Talk About Poetry", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 30 (September 1831), 483-4). Yet this class values the rural

about the power of poetry we have already examined. They hold working class poetry to limitations on tone and subject matter which damp down the possibility of middle class readers experiencing it as an attack on themselves, but which encourage the reader to absorb from the representation of working-class experience norms which they might otherwise be immune to. This topic is most usefully examined here through a demonstration of the way Carlyle's review of Ebenezer Elliott is determined by his poetics. This review is representative of the way middle-class criticism deals with working class writing.[58] Carlyle lauds Elliott for his personal achievement and for

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folk tradition, wishing to preserve it against what are seen as the twin poisons of print and urbanisation, and adopts the ballad as one of its best-selling genres (see e.g. "Modern Ballad Writers", *Westminster Review*, 55 (April 1851), 1-48; W. E. Aytoun, "Ancient and Modern Ballad Poetry", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (May 1847), 622-44). More interestingly, particularly in the 1830s, the major periodicals show interest in poetry from working-class writers which uses the genres and metric canons of the elite literary tradition. The entry of working class experience into this tradition is welcomed — as a spate of articles on the Sheffield cutler Ebenezer Elliott, the peasant John Clare, and the domestic servants Mary Colling and John Jones indicates. Robert Burns is a symbol of the class-blindness of poetry and genius throughout our period for the same reason. (Elliott was reviewed in the *Westminster Review*, *Edinburgh Review*, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine*, and *Monthly Repository* in the late twenties and early 30s among others. See also J. G. Lockhart, "John Jones's Attempts in Verse", *Quarterly Review*, 47 [January 1829], 52-82; Robert Southey, "Poetry by Mary Colling", *Quarterly Review*, 47 [June 1830], 80-103; T. H. Lister, "Southey's *Uneducated Poets*", *Edinburgh Review*, 54 [September 1831], 69-84; John Wilson, "Clare's *Rural Muse*", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 38 [August 1835], 231-47).

[58]Though Carlyle is marginally more sympathetic than most critics to the direct expression of social "wrong" as experienced by the working-class, he is by no means the most. See, for a cross section, William Empson, "Elliott's *Poems*", *Edinburgh Magazine*, 60 (October 1834), 74-75; "*The Village*

articulating a mystical experience of right and wrong which is suggestive enough to be the expression of a working-class "Theory" of life speaking to all readers of poetry.[59] At

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Patriarch", *Westminster Review*, (July 1829), 92-93. John Wilson, "Ebenezer Elliot", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 35 (May 1834), 821-2.

[59]"Thomas Carlyle, "Corn-Law Rhymes", *Edinburgh Review*, 55 (July 1832), 349-50. In like vein, Rev. Frederick Robertson invites the Mechanics Institute to give the poetry of the "smoke of the manufactories", but only so as to energise the conditions of social virtue and imperial energy in a way upper class poetry can no longer. It should create "symbols" which attach "enthusiasm" to "thought", unfolding from a social reality only the working-class knows at "first-hand" the values of "human courage ... fidelity, imagination ... tenderness ... endurance ... and the patience of uncomplaining resignation": virtues the whole of the nation is thought to need. (Rev. Fred W. Robertson, "Two Lectures on the Influence of Poetry on the Working Classes, delivered before the members of the Mechanics Institute, February 1852" (Brighton and London, 1852), 59-60.) Charles Kingsley, though focusing on a readership of colonists and lower-class drudges, similarly argues that poetry which appeals to them must also speak to and articulate the interests of the national readership as a whole. Again, however, it is to do so via the site of a disciplinary mode of effect. Working-class poetry (whether by or for them) must be on "subjects which interest the many" — "love, marriage, the sorrows of the poor, their hopes, political and social, their wrongs, as well as their sins and duties". (Charles Kingsley, "Burns and his School", *North British Review*, 13 [November 1851], 183.) It must also, however, be "calm", repeating the effect Kingsley, inspirationally citing William Thom, says Burns has on factory workers. The latter are seen as absolutely demoralised by judicial and factory discipline — "breasts filled with anything but hope and happiness", dehumanised to the point of "tearless[ness] amid cold, and hunger, and weariness, and pain". Burns's songs at once fill the place of "Sermons", preserve "a last relic of moral existence", "wet ... eyes", and (through "A man's a man for a' that") energise a basic form of self-respect (ibid., 180-81). In terms of class politics, what Kingsley praises is ambiguous in effect: temperance and self-improvement were qualities union leaders cultivated in themselves as the basis of class resistance, not mere moral sops. In terms of disciplinary mode, however, the preference is plain. Poetry has a chance of succeeding in its religious (ultimately patriotic) project,

the same time, he takes issue with Elliott's adoption, after Shelley, of a "bitter" or "savage" polemical tone and the language of contemporary political conflict.[60] However, it is not — or not merely — that Carlyle wishes to bar Elliot from exposing inimical social arrangements. It is rather that he questions a way of making that exposure which forecloses poetical technique at the same time as it challenges his view of ultimate political reality.[61] This is clear from an examination of Carlyle's statements elsewhere about the mode of power of poetry.

Carlyle's discussions of this topic spring from his view of the deep structure of the human subject and the characteristics of all valuable discourse. We have already touched upon some of these questions in the chapter on historiography. The human subject, for Carlyle, is an agonistic and existential one, an autonomous, active and perceiving self set against an encircling environment. Valuable discourse provides the subject with a map of this environment, an indication of the subject's purpose within it, and the inspirational energy to act in accordance with those purposes. We are now in a position to extend this

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where the "Church" does not, because the institution and discourse of the latter instils fear and resentment, but the former "trust" (ibid., 159).

[60]Carlyle, "Corn-Law Rhymes", op. cit., 351-2, 361. Empson, otherwise sympathetic, and Kingsley, more distanced, both follow Carlyle in wishing this tone and its antipathy toward the middle-class reader into the dustbin of technical immaturity. John Wilson forgives, but does not prefer, this tone. (Empson, "Elliott's *Poems* , op. cit., 69-70, 83; Kingsley, "Burns and His School", *North British Review*, 31 [November 1851], 165-6; Wilson , "Clare's Rural Muse", op. cit., 241.)

[61]Wilson, for instance, strenuously defends Elliott's right to express what he regards as the causes of his suffering. Elliott's work is not "polluted" by politics, though the politics in it may be "perverted" ("Ebenezer Elliot", op. cit., 822).

analysis. The subject, for Carlyle, is a mystical unity, governed by its "fantasy" of what the world and itself is. Every one of the subject's activities is a manifestation of the deep self which holds the subject together in its individuality. Whatever the subject does, feels, says, thinks, imagines or senses reflects upon and expresses this inner wholeness. At the same time, the consciousness of the subject is greatly overdetermined by the specific social, cultural, historical and physical environment in which it is placed. Each subject exists and has its being only through "symbols" which are historically (and geographically) contingent. In other words, the subject is not merely autonomous, but one with the complex interior structure and mutually affecting relationship with its surroundings of the subject of discipline. Poetry, since it is a valuable discourse, must affect this subject, rooting itself in the "fantasy and the heart".[62]

What is the discursive technique which achieves this? Carlyle deploys two concepts to explain this, one concerning the meaning, one the style of poetic discourse. These are the notions of the "symbol" and of poetic "music". The "symbol" is not merely a trick of discourse, confined to poetry; it is, as we have already mentioned, the effective mode of all internally motivating consciousness. It is an expression where an "Infinite" significance shimmers around something perceived with the "Sense".[63] It is this infinitude of meaning which allows an expression to enter "the deep infinite faculties of man, his Fantasy and Heart", that is, to have power over a subjectivity which we have

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[62] Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, World's Classics Edition (London, Oxford University Press, 1902). 193.

[63] ibid., 191 - 2.

seen has the characteristics of the subjectivity of discipline.[64] There are two ways in which a symbol may subsist, one temporary, the other longer lived. An entity may be arbitrarily dubbed symbolic, as occurs with the symbols of political bodies such as the nation. This however, is only an "extrinsic" symbol and relies wholly on external circumstances for its effect.[65] On the other hand, there are also symbols where the phenomenological form of the signifier has an "intrinsic" significance, rendering it "fit" to express the particular infinitude to which it relates. Such is the structure of every "true Work of Art"; such can inspire human activity for centuries; and the creation of new "intrinsic" symbols is the vocation of the "true Poet".[66] However, poetry is not only the articulation of symbols, it also entails a particular way of introducing them. For Carlyle, poetry is "not *said*, or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence, but *sung,* in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings*, not of the voice only, but of the whole mind".[67] This ecstatic "chant" or "lilt" is linked with poetry's exclusive hold over the deep reaches of being through its capacity to hand perceptions to the reader whole and complete. Poets find some "slight circumstance" of the object which "excites the mind, and urges it to complete the picture, and evolve the meaning thereof for itself".[68] In other words, poetry seeds subjects with a cognition of some object of sense in such a way as to incite them to find out its symbolism. The larger implications of this

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[64] ibid., 191 - 2.

[65] ibid., 191.

[66] ibid., 192.

[67] Carlyle, "Burns", *Edinburgh Review*, 48, (December 1828), 286-7.

point become clear if we consider the comparison Carlyle makes between poetry and prophecy. Prophecy is a "coarse dialect", employing redundancy and ready-made symbols rather than poetry's original and elusive suggestiveness.[69] It makes truth visible to "great masses of men", but in distorted forms which swiftly "grow obselete".[70] Poetry, on the other hand, by virtue of its musical, invocatory, eliciting interruptedness, "feed[s] ... the life-*roots* of all excellent human things ... noble, the pure and great, in all times and places ".[71] In other words, poetry not only has the subjectivity of discipline as its object of power, it seeks to affect this subjectivity by drawing it into an active, autonomous engagement with a normalised cognitive environment. It is this which fuels Carlyle's objections to Ebenezer Elliot. Elliot, says Carlyle, should not use the language of contemporary political conflict — the language of "bread-Tax". Like prophecy, such language is "crabbed" and uses the "cant" of the time; like the "extrinsic" symbol, it

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[68]"Biography", 258-9.

[69]"The Hero as Prophet" says the Koran is full of "iterations, long-windedness, entanglement" and relies heavily on "tradition[al]" stories of prophets, "some fabulous", to articulate its message", *On Heroes etc.*, 64-7.

[70]*On Heroes etc.*, 100.

[71]Indeed, it binds those who can receive it in a communicative matrix which specifically crosses the epochal divide of Greek and Teutonic Paganism, Islam, Christianity and beyond. The norm of suggestiveness is thus a norm of the interchangeability between the metaphysical systems of the Western tradition. (Islam, for Carlyle, is "bastard Christianism", not an extra-European source of truth, [*On Heroes etc.*, 98].) No other religious system is discussed as part of the tradition of development from paganism, though Tibetan Buddhism is briefly mentioned for its crude mechanism for finding a Hero. [*On Heroes etc.*, 5]) Carlyle's mysticism, in other words, is tied to what would now be seen as the logocentric tradition of European Reason.

adopts an arbitrary rallying cry, one which depends on contingent political circumstances both for its meaning and for its inspirational power. On the other hand, a passage celebrating Nature's mutuality ("Cloud trades with river, and exchange is power", etc.) can be cited with approval, even though in context it is an extended and far from occult anti-protectionist analogy.[72] Such images call on elements which are permanently available to sense and open on meanings which exceed, though they also include, the fractional ideological battles of contemporary politics.

The Poet as Object

I want to move now to a second element in these poetics which links poetry as a technique of power to discipline. We have seen that as a mode of influence over readers poetry conformed to some of the aspects of modern power. It evoked and sought to transform the autonomous subjectivity of its addressee, and constructed this subjectivity on the same principles as the subjectivity required for the operation of disciplinary power. (The subjectivity contained a principle of self-determination and was a complex sensory, affective and cognitive structure.) It also sought to transform the subject by enlisting the subject's active participation, by minimising the experience of restriction in the subject, and by surrounding it with a pleasurable but normalised environment — in other words utilising techniques which are all part of discipline. Two of the defining elements of discipline, however, have not been seen so far — the specific technique of surveillance and the identity between the object of knowledge and the object of power. It is necessary now to show that the transactional and hermeneutic machinery of poetry in fact does involve both the knowledge and the surveillance of the object of poetic power we have

[72]Cited in "Corn-Law Rhymes", op. cit., 346.

already identified. It is necessary to show, in other words, that poetry involves the construction of the subject of discipline as a direct object of knowledge, and as an object of the particular kind of knowledge utilised by discipline.

There are two routes through which the direct surveillance of the subject of discipline is posited by Victorian poetics. One is the construction in the discourse of poetry of the subjectivity of the poet. The other is the identification of subjectivity under observation as the defining epistemological substance of poetry. It is the first of these routes that will be examined in the current section. This will also introduce an implication of the poetics of this time which is extremely important for a study of *Idylls of the King*. It reveals the figure of the poet as an agent of power whose power depends upon a practice of the self. Specifically, it shows that poetry's power depends upon the poet's construction of an image of his/her own cognitive and social activity which is to be measured by a normalising surveillance. At the same time, it reveals a surveillance of the subject whose principle varies slightly from the panoptic — one in which the subject's construction as an individualised and normalised object is held to equate not with each minute movement of the subject, but only with its principle or value. It is, in other words, a surveillance which explicitly leaves open a non-observed space as the space in which the subject is to internalise norms, and which therefore expects to measure the subject correctly without observing it at all times.[73] It is this network specifically which is examined in *Idylls of the King*.

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[73] This is the technology of the "examination", as used in schools, universities etc. See *Discipline and Punish*, op. cit., 187.

It is necessary to make one clarification before examining the construction of the poet in poetry. I am not alluding to a critical stereotype pervasive at this time, in which poets were imagined as at the mercy of a periodical critic's power to establish reputations and thus literary careers. This relation is based on a normalising surveillance, but it applies to the subject's published achievement, rather than the subject him/herself. [74] What I am interested in is another assumption, one which governs the judgements meted out by critics: namely, that when poetry reveals its special mode of consciousness to the reader, it constructs the poet as an object of the reader's knowledge. This assumption is at the root of a biographical curiosity in the Victorian media which Tennyson both despised and feared — one which, moreover, after a guest appearance in the mad-scene in *Maud*, becomes one of the determining themes of *Idylls of the King*.[75] "Life and Works of ..." was a favourite form of literary article in the periodical press. It took force from the interpretative nostrum that "a little knowledge of an author is often the best commentary

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[74]The critic panoptically surveys a world which is entirely visible because it is the world of published literary material. He/She measures this world according to the norms of literary judgement and cajoles the subjects who contribute to it to make work which measures up. This is, however, not a properly disciplinary intervention of power. It does not enter, or seek to govern, the subject's existence at all times, only the subject's literary practice. In this respect, it is akin to the intermittent demands for tribute or acknowledgement of the pre-modern forms of what Foucault calls juridico-sovereign power. The relation between writer and critic does become disciplinary, of course, as we shall see, when poetry is conceived as deriving from and giving a window on the whole life of the subject.

[75]See James Eli-Adams, "Harlots and Base Interpretors: Scandal and Slander in *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30, 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 421-39.

upon his works".[76] This, in turn, depended on an oft-attested factor of all nineteenth-century poetics: its expressive assumption, in De Quincey's words, that poetry gave a knowledge of things not in the "dry light" of scientific objectivity, but in the "humid light ... of human passions, desires, and genial emotions".[77]

One of the conundrums that such an assumption throws up is the relationship between the expression of the unformed, hour-by-hour subjective flux of the poet's own experience and the expression which is legitimate in poetry. What we shall examine in this section is the epistemological structure through which early-mid Victorian middle-class men resolve this conundrum in poetics. We may summarize it as follows. Poets must not, in fact, write a directly autobiographical poetry, reproducing the unadulterated surge of their interior response to stories, situations or objects. They must, nonetheless, draw "sincerely" on their own interior life. As such, a poet reveals in individual poems or across a whole oeuvre a typology of consciousness whose structure matches the boundaries and patterns of subjectivity of his/her interior life. This personal anchoring of the subjectivity in poetry authenticates the knowledge of subjectivity poetry provides. At the same time, correlating the subjectivity in a poet's work to the poet's governing identity permits readers to judge both the poetry and the subjectivity by reference to external standards of personal character or acceptable/understandable experience.[78]

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[76]William Empson, "Elliott's *Poems*", *Edinburgh Review*, 60 (October 1834), 68.

[77] Thomas De Quincey, "The Poetry of Pope", *North British Review*, 9 (August 1848), 302.

[78]The extent to which personally verified subjectivity is tested by the average man's sympathies and assumptions about character varies according to the aesthetic and political position of the critic. In

Although they are not called on to expose the phenomenological emergence of their interiority, it therefore becomes a pre-requisite of poetry that the poet's subjectivity is constituted in it both as the subject of discipline and as the object of a totalizing, individualising and normalising knowledge. On the one hand, the actual condition of a poet's interiority is that it is autonomous, continuous, constantly shifting, and an emotional, physical and intellectual structure in relationship with an external world. On the other hand, in poetry, this substance is re-constituted so as to satisfy the requirement for a single, complete, patterned and measurable object. In the texts with which we are concerned there are three ways in which this reconstitution occurs. Two are mainly the prerogative of the avant-garde theorists of the thirties. The other permeates the criticism of Carlyle and the "widely-circulating" journals. I shall consider the latter first.

We must begin this discussion with a glance at Isobel Armstrong's notice of the complex tension in expressive poetics between concealment and revelation of the poet's interiority. She cites Dobell, Hallam, Mill, Lewes and Keble to show that theorists project (though "not willingly") a hermeneutic structure whereby the words of a poem are "both the *means* of expression and the *form* of [true interiority's] repression".[79] This is a mode of the "double poem", one particularly significant for women poets, who theorists

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conservative theory this test forms the entire cockpit of critical assessment. Though avant-garde criticism seeks to broaden and refine the average man's standards, the poet is nonetheless still constituted as an object of knowledge for a gaze measuring by those standards.

[79]Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry*, op. cit., 341-2.

confine to the monoglot flatness of a lyric, emotive, private sphere of meaning.[80] The analysis is important for us because it suggests the invisibility of subjectivity in poetry as well as its visibility. It suggests, in other words, that the disclosure of the poet as object of a disciplinary gaze is incomplete. This does not invalidate our argument, however. The discipline I am considering does not depend on the direct exposure of the poet's interiority but on the detectability of its individual, normal boundaries. We can see how this works by focusing on an aspect of expressive tension which Armstrong does not develop. She notes that nineteenth-century poetic repression — like that of Prince Albert and Tennyson's Arthur — is non-Freudian. It is the conscious inexpressibility or conscious refusal to express a conscious state.[81] She does not note that the converse of this repression is a mode of deliberately inadvertent disclosure of aspects of the self which the poet may not grasp with full consciousness. The conflict between "*ex*pression and *re*pression", in other words, is not simply an opposition, alternation or even dialectical tension between undifferentiated confession and undifferentiated secrecy. Rather, it is structured partially by ideas about intentional and unintentional communication. It is about aspects of personal being which *ought or ought not* to be revealed and aspects of personal being which *cannot help* but be revealed if true poetry is to be written. In conservative theory this emerges through two contradictory requirements. Critics insist repeatedly that poets avoid "egotism", and articulate strong distaste for "selfish" versions of the "self-conscious" epistemology of modern poetry. They also consistently prize poetry which feels personally authenticated, stating that the œuvre of a good poet is an

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[80]ibid., 320-24 et passim.

[81]ibid., 343.

"analogy" (de Vere's word) for his/her personality.[82] What reconciles these positions is a complete discontinuity between the aspects of the self at stake in "egotism" and those at stake in the personally authentic. The former, though involving the attempted expression of biographically significant interior states, is thought to expand accessory and exiguous elements of subjectivity. The latter, conversely, though not symbolising the poet's interiority as it is actually experienced, is thought to be composed of — and thus play out — interiority's underlying patterns of identity. In this way, an individualising, normalising and totalizing gaze can operate on the poet's interiority, without the interiority itself being strictly visible.[83] In the avant-garde critics of the thirties, a slightly different epistemology emerges. These critics initially demarcate poetry from discourse which adapts the expression of interiority to an external audience, insisting that what poetry indites must genuinely belong to the poet. At the same time, in two separate theoretical discussions, they theorise the mining of elements in the structure of interior identity for the poetic symbol and the implied presence of the whole pattern of identity in the lyric of projection or empathy. In neither case is it assumed that interiority itself is directly expressed by the poet. In both cases, however, what is expressed is firmly connected to the poet's underlying structure of interiority. Again, in other words, the poet's self is composed in poetry as the object of an individualising, normalising and

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[82]Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", 420.

[83]Contrast with the total epistemological project of poetry, which I shall examine in the next section. The interiority which becomes visible, however, is not anyone's in particular, only one state in the total possible field of human subjectivity.

totalizing gaze, without the self having necessarily to be fully apparent. Both kinds of procedure emerge in the poetics of disguised self-allegory.

Let us begin with Carlyle. For him, a first condition of all deeply communicative discourse, poetry included, is speaking honestly about what one has oneself witnessed and acted on as truth — a condition at once epistemological, existential and expressive. The poet, like all heroic and "sincere" minds, "in earnest" with the universe, avoids "Hearsay" and "Cant". He speaks only what "he has himself known, and by experience become assured of", only what has been "a light to his own steps". [84] As Carlyle develops it, this has two important implications. On the one hand, it counters contemporary assumptions about the language and sophistication of poetry which make it conditional on a poet's education and class. On the other hand, it counters another apparent contemporary trend — the tendency among poets to seek poetic excitement in "external circumstances" rather than "themselves", in historically or geographically exotic subject matter rather than "discerning" the "Ideal ... under and within" the "familiar and near at hand". [85] In other words, for Carlyle, the epistemological condition of poetry inheres in a specific kind of object of knowledge: the autonomous poet's passionate subjectivity as it registers and responds to its environment, and as it constitutes itself as a stable cognitive structure in relation to that environment. He thus makes the epistemological object of poetry the activity of what we have called the subject of discipline.

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[84] "The Hero as Poet", *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841), ed. Carl Niemeyer (Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 81; "Corn-Law Rhymes", 345; "Burns", 286.

[85] "Burns", 277; cf. *On Heroes etc.*, 95.

However, Carlyle's arguments do not simply entail that the poet's subjectivity is constituted in poetry as the subjectivity of discipline. They also entail the poet's self-constitution as the object of an individualising, normalising and totalizing knowledge. On the one hand, poets record not isolated real events but "what has been a light" to their lives as a whole, what has been their respective "Ideal". The instants of perception in poems always represent a governing pattern of identity, rather than random mutations of interiority. On the other hand, as Carlyle's extensive discussion in "Burns" of the relation between the sincere subject of poetry and the subject of popularly successful poetry makes clear, the principles a poet articulates cannot simply be taken at face value. The highest poetry, it is true, sets forth the "religion" and "practical way of looking at the world" of "ten silent centuries": it is "epic" rather than lyric.[86] Nonetheless, poetry cannot be constituted out of the norms of a poet's immediate readership. Conflating linguistic, semantic and social modes of measurement, Carlyle insists that poetic discourse does not consist in what will "find fit audience and recompense" among the poet's own generation, for the latter is the demonized "plausible", "conjectural" "hearsay" or "cant".[87] Rather, the "sincerity" of poetry is a "difficult" exercise of "intellect" — the individual poet's lifelong search for and adherence to the best available "Belief" — one which may be incomplete and which may have to face the negative observation of the majority in the poet's society, though it is always socially circulating. [88] For Carlyle, in other words, the subjectivity of the poet is at once the subject of discipline, a subjectivity always striving to make its utterances thoroughly representative of its *own* principle, one

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[86] *On Heroes etc.*, 101, 110.

[87] "Corn-Law Rhymes", 345; cf., *On Heroes etc.*, 80-81.

[88] "Burns", 291, 308 - 10. See also the discussion of Balaam, "Corn-Law Rhymes", 359-60; and Dante's exile, *On Heroes etc.*, 86-9.

which offers itself to a multiplicity of potentially normalising gazes, and one which must adhere to and be influenced by only the best available gaze. Though there is more than one normalising knowledge for which the autonomous subjectivity of the poet is an object, there will always be a normalising element, since no-one can escape the "clothes" of their place and time. Poetry then, as a mode of discourse, depends on the subject of discipline (in the person of the poet) becoming constituted as an object of an individualising and totalizing knowledge.

Conservative theorists in the periodical press promote an almost identical epistemological structure as the structure of good poetry — the only difference being a far greater faith in the common sense of the readership as a standard of judgement. A good way into their discussions is the debate among these theorists about Aristotelian and Baconian theories of poetry — the tension between poetry as mimesis and poetry as creation. Conservative writers resolve this tension in a way which enables poetry to be expressive of the poet's personality and interiority at the same time as it represents a world of objects which could be recognised outside the experience of poetry. We can see all of these ideas in writing of the early 1830s by the notorious late Romantic critic, John Wilson.[89] For Wilson, in Coleridgean mode, it is "a great and universally acknowledged

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[89]Tennyson came to agree with Wilson's caustic judgement of much of the 1830 *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. Over the thirties he turned his poetry from avant-gardist, sensuous experimentation toward an attempt to reconcile the aesthetic imperative for new forms with a felt social imperative for palpable and popular effectiveness. Tennyson initially took umbrage at Wilson's strictures, inserting a taunting squib "To Christopher North" in the 1832 *Poems*. (See John Wilson, "Motherwell's *Poems*", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 33 (April 1833) Part II, 669-70 for a response.) By 1834, however, he was writing in apology and acquiescence to Wilson. (Letter to John Wilson, 26th April, 1834, Lang and Shannon, op. cit., 1, 109.)

truth, 'that man makes his world'" — that subjectivity colours all perception of objects.[90] Poetry, however, expresses a very specific piloting of this "humid" cognitive relation. It is the expression of a poet's "inner being" when it is "musically tempered to repose" — free from "all that ordinarily pollutes, or degrades, or enslaves our moral being".[91] This has two corollaries. Poetry becomes a reproduction of cognition "wedded" to, in "love" with, the external world. It does not take its expression from "surviving traditions", but turns anew to "Nature and human life". It overflows with "impressions which have been flung from the face and bosom of Nature upon [poet's] spirits, or have risen up to them in strong sympathy with the affections and passions of other men".[92] It is, in other words, at once a representation of a common phenomenal world and the recording of a perception of and response to it which is the poet's own, and which ramifies throughout the poet's consciousness.[93] However, this does not mean that we are privy to the poet's consciousness of worldly, or day-to-day, concerns. Poets reveal themselves at their "purest" moments, those in which they themselves are in closest contact with the "ideal"

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[90]John Wilson, "Coleridge's *Poetical Works*", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 36 (October 1834), 544-5. Before his association with *Blackwood's* Wilson contributed to Coleridge's *The Friend*. Wilson's ideas retained their potency in *Blackwood's* throughout our period. *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, the long-running self projection of the *Blackwood's* editorial staff of the twenties in which Wilson's critical alter ego, Christopher North, was most fully developed, was reprinted in the 1850s.

[91]ibid., 547, 542.

[92]John Wilson, "The Christian Year", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*", (June 1830), 834.

[93]Wilson's preferences regarding this response are Wordsworthian: a celebration of the joys of rural "repose" and the pleasures of simple family relationships.

which governs their inner self-determination. We become "familiar", in other words, not with the self's quotidian and inconsistent phenomenal emergence, but with the "impress of [the poet's] character": how it is "to be judged on earth what manner of man he is".[94] In other words, the poet is constituted specifically as a collection of states of sensory, emotive and intellectual consciousness whose traits mark him or her uniquely, completely and for final judgement. Poetry becomes at once representation of the poet's subjectivity as the subject of discipline and as an individualised, normalised, and totally surveyed object. To ensure that this occurs is, indeed, the poet's "calling on earth".

The same epistemological structure emerges in conservative criticism from the pens of Aubrey de Vere, Henry Taylor and Coventry Patmore, all of whom expound at length the relation between biography and poetry. de Vere's and Taylor's criticism joins with that of Hartley Coleridge in expressing greater caution than Wilson about contemporary expressive poetry. Each recommends a turn away from exclusive concern with the self and a revival of mimetic interest in what de Vere, expanding Taylor's exposition of Wordsworth, calls "that practical truth which constitutes reality".[95] None,

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[94]John Wilson, "The Christian Year", op. cit., 542.

[95]Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", *Edinburgh Review*, 89 (April 1849), 359. de Vere's substantial discussion occupies pp. 359 -80. For Taylor's phrase see "Wordsworth's Sonnets", *Quarterly Review*, 69 (June 1841), 11-12. The "Preface" to Taylor's play *Philip van Artevelde* also discusses this issue at length. Coleridge talks of poets having to turn to "nature and man as they are", "Modern English Poetesses", *Quarterly Review*, 66 (March 1840), 382, 400. Wilson had been less polemically assertive of the contradiction between "egotism" and poetic mimesis. ("Clare's Rural Muse", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, [August 1835], 241.)

however, excludes the poet's interiority from poetry. Indeed each cherishes, as a pinnacle of poetic achievement, poetry's expression of the poet's "being". These concerns are reconciled by associating mimesis with a particular mode of self-expression and a particular kind of subjectivity. First, it is accepted by all three critics that the subjectivity expressed in poetry is at once sensate, passionate and rational. Second, however, each articulates unease with a mode of poetry which publishes this subjectivity with Byronic self-dramatisation. Expressive poetry is inadequate if it is consciously and solicitously autobiographical. Lasting poetry cannot, like his, "eddy round" emotions it owns as the poet's or situations too close to those in which the poet is a biographical protagonist.[96] This is partly a matter of distaste at salacious (and thus temporary) appeals to the reader.[97] More importantly, however, it is a rejection of what are called "petty", "selfish" or "unmanly" conditions of interiority. These are expounded as marks of a subjectivity which cannot constitute itself as a stable internal identity. The Byronic persona does not possess and absorb the emotions it experiences as satellite elements of a permanent core. The interiority it expresses, as such, is adventitious to "being".[98] Poetry emerges, as

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[96]Hartley Coleridge, "Modern English Poetesses", op. cit., 381-2. Taylor's rejection of Byron can be seen in the "Preface" to *Philip van Artevelde*, xiii-xiv. de Vere alludes to Byron and Shelley in repudiating a self-dramatising poetry in "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", 368-70.

[97]Coleridge's warnings come in a part of his review which deals with Caroline Norton's verse. Taylor deplores the meagre demands of the twenties readership. See Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian Britain* (London, Virago, 1989), 51-88 for a summary of Norton's fearfully undeserved notoriety.

[98]Taylor scorns the Byronic hero as a class of "beings in whom there is no strength except that of their intensely selfish passions", and therefore contemptible to "a reader of masculine judgement" because "weak

Coleridge puts it, only when the poet writes not "about the heart" but "from the heart".[99] It is a pre-requisite of poetry, in other words, that the self revealed in it is a stable, structured and single object associated with the poet's core identity. This involves the opening of expressive discourse to a reflection of objects outside subjectivity, but one which necessarily remains their reflection in subjectivity, as in Wilson. For de Vere, "the poet applies his own experience, analogically and by imaginative induction, to regions unknown and forms of life untried", and thus may "kindle into a wise indignation or 'share the passion of a just disdain', though he should have no personal injuries to resist or to revenge". [100] For Taylor, the mind of the poet "wedded" to Nature[101] "lies open to

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of mind". He contrasts favourably Hamlet's "conception of a heroical character" — "that man that is not passion's slave" ("Preface", op. cit., xv-xvi). Coleridge notes that continuing in "the narrow circle of personal and domestic feelings" is "morbid" and "without progress to any spiritual end, [or] retrospect to any moral source". He further compares this mode of "impassioned" verse to the "red heat of a stove", rather than the "cheerful shine of a candle or the genial shafts of the sunlight". ("Modern English Poetesses", op. cit., 382.) The lack of "spiritual end" or "moral source" indicates a consciousness not bound to the soul's teleological development. The images of light associate a gentle expression as something bound to the inner being of a thing, and a violent one with something adventitious to inner structure. I.e. heat is not a property of the stove, but something put into it. The candle's and sun's light, on the other hand, derive from the burning of an inner core. de Vere similarly associates the "ravings of impotent self will" with a "passion" and a "nature" which is "convuls[ive]", rather than "that far mightier fire [which comes] from the heart of things" ("Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", 368).

[99]Coleridge, "Modern English Poetesses", op. cit., 382.

[100]Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", *Edinburgh Review*, 90 (October 1849), 404. Cf. "The world is always full of ... trials; and surely, if a poet's sympathies be but large enough, he may kindle into a wise

[it] with an ever wakeful susceptibility, and an impulse from without will send it far into the regions of thought".[102] This has two implications. On the one hand, it reinforces the constitution of the poet's self in poetry as the subject of discipline: it is autonomous but also responsive, and it is a complex cognitive structure. On the other hand, it means that this subjectivity is constituted as the object of an individualising and totalizing knowledge. The poet does not seek to mirror his or her "being", but inevitably draws on it, leaving a record of its contours in the paths of "thought" or limits of "induction" which are the discursive reflex of response to the world. In de Vere and Taylor, this gives to a poet's œuvre a cognitive specificity which corresponds to Wilson's notion of poetry as a knowledge of the poet's "ideal" soul. "Every portion" of a poem "must be a true reflection from [the poet's] mind, or from nature as contemplated by that mind". The total work of a poet is then in "keeping" with the shape of his "total being", differentiated from the work of "other poets" by a "mode of viewing life, character and nature" as well as "the species of thought, sentiment, or passion which [it] express[es]".[103] Or as Taylor puts it: "Every portion of [a great] writer's works has a value beyond its intrinsic worth, as being part and

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indignation or 'share the passion of a just disdain', though he should have no personal injuries to resist or to revenge" ("Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", 370).

[101]Both Taylor and Wilson have this phrase from Wordsworth.

[102]Henry Taylor, "Wordsworth's Sonnets", op. cit., 13.

[103]Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 378. Compare the discussions of Shelley and Keats in de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 420-29.

lot of a great mind, and having correlations with every other part".[104] In other words, while not disclosing the quotidian actuality of their subjective lives, poets reveal its scope, peculiarities and typical forms — all of what makes up the structure which governs their interiority and their behaviour.

There is one further quality attaching to the constitution of the poet's subjectivity in these writings. This is defined by the view each critic has of the common reader. The work of mimesis entails that when the poet comes before the judgement of a public readership, the poet's subjectivity is revealed as the object of a normalising knowledge. The poet's inner cognitive structure can be measured by the way in which it registers the external world, and the poet should pay attention to that measure when learning the art of poetry. de Vere develops this principle in a variety of *nostra* about the requirement for "truth" in poetry — truth being, in this instance, a standard of accuracy in perceiving both the natural world and the world of human psychology and interaction which is defined by an accumulated but evolving wisdom possessed by the readership as a whole.[105] Taylor, meanwhile, appeals to similar standards to define Wordsworth as a better poet than Coleridge, and to ridicule the "phantasmagoric" landscapes of Shelley. The representation of the external world and response to it should accord with the expectations, feelings and

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[104]Henry Taylor, "Wordsworth's Sonnets", op. cit., 1.

[105]The poet's individuality is reflected not in its expression of eccentric or quaint byways of interiority, but in the unique "regen[cy]" it holds over "the depths of truth". Each poet carves out a "poetic world" whose "verisimilitude" with respect to the portion of "Nature's infinitude" it represents ensures its closing with "the sympathies of men". Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 378-9.

insights which have proved practicable for the majority of individuals and societies.[106] As such, then, not only is the poet's subjectivity in poetry equated with the structure of the subject required by discipline, but it is constituted as the object of the mode of knowledge utilised by discipline. It is a individualised and normalised object which is supposed to correspond with the totality of the substance which is known. Moreover, just as in Carlyle, this surveillance machine has characteristics which differentiate it from the classic panoptic model, but which are important in studying *Idylls of the King*. It is able to know its object fully even though it does not observe it continuously, and the condition of this is the object's own expressive and cognitive practice, which constitutes every public expression as a representative, rather than casual, one.

Coventry Patmore's criticism in the *North British* provides a useful adjunct to these arguments. Patmore accepts the "subjectivity" of modern poetry — its interest in "self-conscious" subject-matter.[107] Unlike the above critics, he therefore repeatedly broaches a method of expressing admittedly autobiographical experience in poetry. This mode, nevertheless, sports an identical epistemological structure to what appears in Taylor's and de Vere's poetics. First, poetry must not exist for personal "gratification". Patmore attacks "modern" verse because it is "indulgent", expressing emotional states

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[106]Each "capacious and powerful mind" absorbs "truths", but reveals in poetry only "*that portion of truth*" to which its "temperament" gives "predominant influence". Henry Taylor, "Wordsworth's *Poetical Works*", op. cit., 325-6.

[107]Coventry Patmore, "*In Memoriam*", *North British Review*, 13 (August 1850), 551-52.

merely for the "excitement" of "contemplating them".[108] Second, this "incomplete ... self-consciousness" communicates feeling only as something exigent to identity. It is a contemplation of interiority as something which leads a "loathsome independent life" divorced from the soul.[109] Third, valuable self-expression gives more than knowledge of the self. It communicates the self as subjectivity's echoing of the other. In Patmore, this derives from an epistemological structure of observation and sympathy which the detached poetic eye applies to the self's own past states. This structure is identical to what the above critics apply to external objects. "Never was a good love-song made by a poet in love, but when his passion has only lately ceased to be a part of his life, when every recollection fills his heart with tender, but undisturbing echoes, when he can stand off and regard his affection as an object."[110] A later essay expands the point. While we live "through" experience and "feeling", we "are unaware of all that is contained in [its] reality". Poetic expression of "feeling" expresses our "re-liv[ing it] in thought, [with] every faculty we turn upon it ... now alive with consciousness".[111] It is a dramatic projection of the entire structure of some defining element of our interior lives. As with Wilson, it is the constitution of the self for an individualising, totalizing gaze. Patmore also makes clear, however, that this construction of subjectivity in poetry places it before a normalising eye. What we "image" must be on a "common level" with "ordinary

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[108]ibid., 551.

[109]ibid., 551.

[110]Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Poems — The Princess*", *North British Review*, 9 (May 1849), 48-9.

[111]Coventry Patmore, "Poetry — The Spasmodists", *North British Review*, 28 (February 1858), 232.

feelings and plain humanities of speech".[112] It is not that poetry may not express "hitherto evanescent and unobserved affection".[113] It is that poetry's "charm" lies in "common human experience being rendered in [the poet's] subtler light, and coloured in the prism of his own personality".[114]

The same underlying assumptions emerge in two critics who represent, from widely different political perspectives, what Armstrong identifies as the pathological theory of expressive poetics. Both the Tractarian reactionary John Keble and the proto-feminist David Masson reject Aristotelian imitation and insist that poetry is a psychological and emotional "safety valve". Neither equates this with a poetics of exclamatory self-expression — or any kind of discourse rendering the self directly visible because the self is its direct epistemological object. Both, in fact, see poetry involving a disguised release of the poet's interiority, one in which the reader can observe the poet's individual condition, but only as a pattern read off from the poet's representation of a common phenomenal world. Each theorizes a rather different mode of this disguised release of the self, but for each it remains a condition or inevitable "accessory" of poetry — one which the poet deliberately attends to in writing. Keble develops these ideas first in relation to religious feeling, extending them in the 1840s to cover all of poetic expression. In both versions, Keble insists that poetry be written "sincerely". This is developed in two directions. In "Sacred Poetry" Keble demands that poetry represent

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[112]ibid., 238.

[113]Coventry Patmore, "*In Memoriam*", op. cit., 551.

[114]Coventry Patmore, "Poetry — The Spasmodists", op. cit., 238-9.

situations — with their attendant feelings — which the poet has at first hand, rather than "from report and fancy only".[115] He demands too that a poem's feeling appear to be one "habitual" to the poet.[116] In the *Praelectiones Academicae* these nostra re-appear in two forms. "Primary poets", says Keble, are those who genuinely write for "self-relief", and therefore exhibit "consistent" and "modest" emotions, avoiding attention-seeking idiosyncrasy of feeling.[117] At the same time, their self-relief is always an attempt to restore "absent objects".[118] It is to the representation of these which the poet always returns, even though intermittently, "ironically" and bypassing normally noticed aspects of these objects.[119] Especially in long poems, which express not "pathos" ("passing impulse[s] of feeling") but "ethos" ("mild and gentle" feelings which compose "the natural bent of our temperament and character") relief comes not by reference to feeling but by representing those feelings' objects.[120] Interiority is gauged (as exhaustive analyses of Homer, Virgil, the Greek dramatists and later Latin poets show) by adding up these objects, reading with the grain of "irony" so that the poet's "real" attitude to them is

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[115]John Keble, "Sacred Poetry", *Quarterly Review*, 32 (January 1823), 215.

[116]ibid., 219.

[117]John Keble, *Praelectiones Academicae* (1842), trans. Edward Kershaw, "Keble's Lectures on Poetry: 1832-41", 2 vols., (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1912), I, 53-4, 68.

[118]ibid., I, 19-22, 77

[119]ibid., I, 77.

[120]ibid., I, 88-90.

conveyed to "sympathetic hearts".[121] Similarly, poetry is the greater as it reveals "ethos": interiority which is "framed after and in accord with the man's secret nature". All the familiar structure is here. The poet's subjectivity is understood as the subjectivity of discipline — autonomous, emotive, sensory and thinking, but in reciprocal cognitive relation to an external world. Simultaneously, this subjectivity is constituted in poetry as the object of knowledge of discipline — as an object which is single, individualised, known in its totality, and judgeable on the grounds of norms (which are here norms about what is long-standing and not attention seeking).

David Masson, one of Arnold's *bêtes noires* in the 1853 Preface, works with a distinction similar to Keble's between poems as revelations of a deciduous passage of interiority and *œuvres* as discursive structures which reflect permanent patterns of personality. In a formulation directed simultaneously against Aristotle, Plato and Bentham, Masson defines poetry as the creation of "fictitious concrete".[122] Poems themselves, in a description adopted from Goethe, are caused by the need to vent once for all a complex accumulation of "oppress[ive] and agitat[ing] ... feelings and longings".[123] All the elements of a poem — every detail of the "fictitious concrete" comprised by its "story ... minor incidents, scenes and characters" — is "a sort of allegory" of this bursting

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[121]ibid., I, 73.

[122]David Masson, "Theories of Poetry and a New Poet", *North British Review*, 19 (August 1853), 301

[123]ibid., 318.

inner state.[124] (In Keble, it should be noted, many elements of a poem do not reflect the desire to express subjectivity.) As a "concrete" representation the poet's mind is thus rendered visible not by direct description of its own state, but via the symbolic resonance of a virtual reality created by selecting from the whole of natural and human existence "up to the present".[125] The contours of a poet's personality as a whole, meanwhile, are reproduced in qualitative differences in the verisimilitude and emphases of his or her creations with respect to the various aspects of reality which can be turned into "fictitious concrete". "The imagination, though in one sense it acts loose, and apart from the personality, ... seems, in a deeper sense, restricted by the same law as [personality], in its choice and apprehension of the concrete."[126] Though Masson does not elaborate this suggestion in Keble's mode, as Arnold seems to have recalled him doing,[127] the implication is clear. The poet does not draw the veil from personality in his/her poetry. Nonetheless, the veil of poetry is both a direct consequence of the need to communicate the poet's own feelings, and one which, in its patterns of representation of the phenomenal world, clings to the physiognomy of the poet's interiority. It thus constitutes subjectivity in verse in the familiar way: as the subject of discipline, and as the object of an individualising and totalizing gaze: one which searches for qualities which specify the poet as an individual, and which are thought to cover the whole of the poet's being. And

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[124] ibid., 318.

[125] ibid., 310-11.

[126] ibid., 315.

[127] He does not argue that we can thus trace a revelation of the poet's pattern of personality in his work.

in both critics, so far as this personality is diverted into a unique refraction of a common phenomenal or emotional world, it is constituted too as the object of a normalising gaze.

The origin of much of what we have just seen in Dobell and Masson — even in Patmore and de Vere — lies in the poetics of feeling and dramatic lyric developed in the first half of the 1830s by Hallam, Fox and Mill. However, there are significant differences between the two groups. We noted above that a number of late Romantic and conservative critics make poetry the communication of one particular condition of subjectivity. Poetry expresses the poet's interiority when it is purged of morally valueless feeling and surveys objects other than itself. Over time, poetry may thus leave a model of interiority's whole, unique, sempiternal pattern: each time the light of the world strikes subjectivity, its colours scatter and fade along some portion of the structures of inner life. The same underlying concern fuels Hallam's, Fox's and Mill's discussion of poetry and self-expression. The subjectivity which defines poetry is a portion of the poet's *proper* self, owned uniquely, utterly independent of any other. These three theorists, however, do not focus on a *moral* practice of the poet's self to guarantee this visibility. They attend instead to its *rhetorical* conditions. One consequence of this is to give poetry a wider range of emotional subjects, less constrained by the readership's conventions of valuable feeling. More importantly, these three writers are extremely alert to the problem Armstrong poses. They theorise loss between poetic symbols and the subjectivity they are meant to reveal. Their discussions of the relation between poetic language and the personality type of the poet, however, and of the ghostly, implied presence of the poet's identity in the lyric of projection or empathy, anticipate the theories of self-revelation that we have just examined. Just as significantly, from the point of view of poetry as a practice of the self, loss of visibility does not mean that poets should disguise themselves.

They are still portrayed as working towards a self-constitution as object of the eye of discipline.

Let us begin by noting each writer's discussion of poetry as non-oratorical emotional expression. Each echoes Carlyle's concern with poetry which eludes the reader's gaze by building a false image of the self. J. S. Mill, for instance, insists that poetry is not merely "impassioned truth" but "feeling confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude, and embodying itself in symbols which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind".[128] The distinction is between poetry and an eloquence defined not simply as "utterance [of] feelings ... to work upon ... another", but as "feelings ... *modified* by the presence of others" [my emphases].[129] Poetry, in other words, is more specifically defined than as the "humid light" of expressive interiority ("things as they appear ... through the medium of the imagination set in action by the feelings").[130] It is representation of that particular interiority which belongs to the subject in its autonomy. It communicates only the "self-dependent" perceptions of a unique subject.[131] One of the objects of knowledge of poetry, in other words, is the subject of discipline as instantiated in the poet. Just so Fox and Hallam. Poetry sidesteps argument because it blocks poetry's expressive goal,

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[128]J. S. Mill, "What is Poetry", op. cit., 348.

[129]ibid., 349, 353.

[130]ibid., 347.

[131]Eloquence, says Mill, reproduces what gains "the applause, or sympathy, or concurrence of the world in general" — what reflects a "sociable", non-specific identity (ibid., 349).

articulating a subjectivity mis-aligned with the poet's proper identity. Coleridge, says Fox, is "not his own man" in his prose, because there he has "something else in view besides telling out what he thinks and feels in the melodious words which it spontaneously assumes"; it therefore does not express his "profound convictions and thoughts" as his poetry does.[132] Hallam warns against "the combinations of reflective thought" for inveigling the poet to "pile his thoughts into a rhetorical battery, that it may convince, instead of letting them glow in the natural course of contemplation, that they may enrapture".[133] Poetry must reproduce the "natural" existential emergence of the poet's interiority, not one which disguises subjectivity's order for greater logical effect (note that "natural" is not quite identical with actual). For each, poetry requires the exposure of subjectivity in a form which pertains to structures which really belong to the poet's inner life. As Mill indicates, it is not suggested that poems ever wholly succeed in rendering these visible. (Fox and Hallam echo this in analyses of projective symbol we shall examine shortly.) It is suggested, however, that the distinctive rhetorical function of poetry is the training of the window of expression on them.

As befits their smaller confidence in the ability of symbol to render interiority visible, Hallam's, Mill's and Fox's poetics do not theorise the complete traversal of the structures of the self over an œuvre. What they do examine, however, is the manifestation and non-manifestation of a poet's proper subjectivity in individual poems. There are two major issues which they confront. One is the condition of identity of the poet of feeling.

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[132]William J. Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 5.

[133]A. H. Hallam, "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry", op. cit., 86.

Let us take Mill first. In both his major contributions to poetics, Mill develops the idea that "poets" are "so constituted, that emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are linked together".[134] In Mill's system, this has the consequence that the poet's identity has the same components of structure as poetic language. The structure of individual poems, for him, can turn either on a "thought" or a "feeling".[135] The discourse of poems, on the other hand, is only motivated by emotional connections between its elements and this structure.[136] In the same way, the movement of the poet's interiority may consist of "thoughts and images" as well as "feelings". The orders of "habitual association" which lay down pathways for this movement, however, consist entirely of the clustering of subjectivity around emotion. Even the cultivated poet, who may lay down logical structures of association, finds these structures given "motive" by whatever labyrinth of feeling impels the search for truth.[137] This has an interesting repercussion for self-expression. Each of a poem's images is a mixing of associated domains of consciousness, and the domain of feeling is the same in every one of those images. Each instantaneous state of a poet's interiority is also a mixing of associated domains of consciousness, with the domain of feeling (a) being identical with other possible states which have the same feeling or one very close to it (b) being the stable

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[134]J. S. Mill, "The Two Kinds of Poetry", op. cit., 356. Cf. J. S. Mill, "Tennyson's Poems", op. cit., 413.

[135]J. S. Mill, "The Two Kinds of Poetry", op. cit., 357-8.

[136]See especially the remarks about Wordsworth. Though not naturally poetic, because he has chosen poetry as his medium of communication he enforces the "parent thought" by "the strongest feelings, and the thoughts with which most of feeling is naturally or habitually connected" (ibid. 358).

element of the instantaneous state — the one which gives that state the possibility of existing at all in the poet's mind. A poem, in other words, is three things as an element of the poet's consciousness. Because it includes emotion, each of its symbols is necessarily an actual instance of the poet's interiority, even if its only function is to represent another of those instances. At the same time, as a sequence of images held together by emotion it is necessarily a possible sequence of associative states in the poet, because the sequence of experience of the poet is determined by emotion. At the same time, again because it is a sequence of associated instants of consciousness connected by emotion, it represents one of the actual structural pathways of the poet's being. It is not merely that a poem exemplifies a possible transient series of perceptions, but that it directly shows one of the branches of the underlying pattern of a poet's subjectivity. Of course, this does not mean that the reader comes into direct contact with the poet's interiority, or sees it exactly. While the reader can be sure that the collection of symbols which make up a poem reverberates as an element of the pattern of the poet's identity, it is not possible for the reader to be absolutely sure that what he/she sees is that pattern itself, or its elements. Each symbol is, after all, only the "nearest possible equivalent" of "feeling". Nonetheless, poems do thus constitute subjectivity as an object of knowledge so that it is the subjectivity of discipline, so that it is irrevocably attached to the poet, and so that it is a single moment of the structure of the poet's interiority. While not being directly revealed, the subjectivity of the poet is thus constructed in poetry as the subject of discipline and as the object of an individualising gaze. For Mill, this construction is also normalising. The poet may not use symbols whose associational matrix is so far from the

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[137]J. S. Mill, "Tennyson's Poems", op. cit., 413; J. S. Mill, "The Two Kinds of Poet", op. cit., 363.

expectations and experience of the readership that it is not understood: he/she in other words can only present a subjectivity whose structural pathways can be represented by normalised associations.[138]

Hallam's poet of sensation operates in just the same way. This creature, a product for Hallam of the 1820s and after, is one whose "fine organs trembled into emotion at colours, and sounds, and movements, unperceived or unregarded by duller temperaments".[139] As in Mill this constitution of experience as a series of emotionally valent representations of objects rebounds directly on the poet's access to a rich symbolic language. The poets of sensation "did not seek for images to illustrate their conceptions" for "they had no need to seek; they lived in a world of images; for the most important and extensive portion of their lives consisted in those emotions, which are immediately conversant with sensation".[140] Once again, it is possible to read all the images which embody emotion in a poem (though not necessarily the "leading sentiment" it seeks to express) as instances of the actual substance of a poet's controlling inner life. Again, too, however, only isolated and cannibalised fragments of it become visible. Poetry throws actual building blocks of subjectivity's structure before the reader's gaze, but does not make the structure itself at all explicit.[141] Poetry depends on the self being composed in

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[138] J. S. Mill, "The Poetry of Tennyson", op. cit., 414.

[139]Hallam, op. cit., 87.

[140]ibid., 87.

[141]For Fox and Mill, this fragmentary exposure of the interiority which composes identity also occurs in the subject-matter of some forms of poetry, though neither posit this as a condition of all poetry. Certain kinds

poetry, in other words, as if it could be the object of an individualising and totalizing gaze, even if it cannot ever be fully revealed. The interiority which appears in poetry must be at once proper to the poet alone, and one pertaining to "the most important and extensive part" of the interiority of the poet. Hallam's notion of symbol also entails the constitution of the subject of discipline as the object of a normalising gaze. In this case there are two elements of discourse which are involved. Though the symbols which embody the poet relate to stimuli which others have not noticed, the poet is assumed to have access to the same sensory world as every reader. A poet's sensory perception is therefore under pressure to be normal, in the sense of not distorting what the majority see and hear. At the same time, all poetic communication relies on the accessibility of a poem's "leading sentiment" — the feeling with which it starts. If this, or its association with some external reality, is outside the average ken of the readership, there can be no communication at all. Again, then, there is pressure for the poet's hyper-refined consciousness not to stray far from what is well known. In both cases, the subjectivity of the poet is exposed to a normalising gaze. [142]

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of poetry may be "little else than the utterance of the thoughts and images which pass across [the poet's] mind while some permanent state of feeling is occupying it" (J. S. Mill, "The Two Kinds of Poetry", op. cit., 360). Similarly, Fox isolates as a new topic for poetry "the analysis of particular states of mind" (Fox, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 214). One version of this is comprised by "exhibitions of the writer's mind under certain circumstances or influences". It "test[s] ... the strength or weakness, the wealth or poverty of the intellect, and of its poetical and moral qualities" ("Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 24). In neither case does this exposure lead to an exposure of interior structure, only of some of its components.

[142] It is from analyses like this of the paradoxical revelation and concealment of inner identity in individual poems that the later poet-critics we have examined theorise the reader's extrapolation of a model of identity

The other poetic technique these critics are interested in involves a ghostly modelling of something which represents in one instance the whole structure of the poet's cognitive identity. This emerges in Fox's and Hallam's discussions of the lyric of projection or empathy in Tennyson and Coleridge. Both critics theorise the manifestation of the self in representative form, as a gaze semi-detached from the play the poet's consciousness carries on with alien conditions of identity. Hallam, to use the usual terms, is the promoter of projection.[143] He isolates three means of the poet "embodying himself": the presentation of "ideal characters", of "moods of character" and "delineation of objects".[144] "Ideal characters" allow the poet to present a "predominant feeling" via the "circumstances" connected with the character's story. The method is the same as a "vivid, picturesque delineation of objects ... fused ... in a medium of strong emotion". In either case, every step of discourse "co-respond[s]" to one state of interiority — the

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from a whole œuvre. Because true poetry is a mosaic of extracts from the associative fabric which structures the poet's interiority, the œuvre as a whole can be thought to draw on larger and larger swathes of this fabric. Though no one poem makes identity directly visible, the whole output can only mimic the contours of identity.

[143]For a more extended discussion of these terms, and a tracing of subtle differences in theories of self-revelation in more poetics than I study here, see David Shaw, *The Lucid Veil: Poetic Truth in the Victorian Age* (London, 1987), 58-63, and David Shaw, "Projection and Empathy in Victorian Poetry", *Victorian Poetry*, 19 (1981), 315-36.

[144]"Ideal characters" and "moods of character" appear to be the same on this page (Hallam, op. cit., 93). Subsequently, however, the phrases refer to very different techniques. The former applies to what Hallam calls Tennyson's "new species of poetry" which "graft[s] ... the lyric on the dramatic": the poems on female character which combine the evocation of an idealised and typed personality with the narrator's response to this character (Hallam, op. cit., 99).

"predominant feeling" belonging originally to the poet. The difficulty of communicating interiority itself, in these two modes, is the same as what we have just examined. There is a difference, however, with the adoption of another's consciousness, or the use of "moods of character". At some level, this kind of poem communicates the presence of the poet's whole self as an alienated form in the other's midst. "Recollections of the Arabian Nights", for instance, is read as a reproduction of the "happy ductility of childhood". Yet "there is a latent knowledge which heightens the pleasure, that to our change from really childish thought we owe the capacities by which we enjoy the recollection".[145] The full weight of the poet's proper identity operates behind the consciousness it projects: a reserve power seeing part of itself in the strange conditions of interiority of the other, but encompassing and surpassing it. Fox describes the same process, but (to stay with the usual terms) in modes of empathetic exploration of states of consciousness, rather than representation of "moods" filled with personality. There are, this time, two modes. One involves the placing of consciousness in an imagined situation. The other, more radical, places consciousness into alien conditions of perception. In both cases, consciousness veers between being the poet's, or some universally representative consciousness (or "thinking principle").[146] Fox evokes its structure in lauding Tennyson's powers of multiple incarnation.

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[145]ibid., 94. Compare the comments on "Orianna", "there is no foolish attempt at self-desertion, no attempt at obliterating the present, but every where a full discrimination of how much ought to be yielded, and how much retained" (ibid., 96).

[146]W. J. Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", 10-11, 20, 22, 24, expound these points.

> He does not merely assume their external shapes, and exhibit his own mind masquerading. he takes their sense, feelings, nerves, and brain ... ; still it is himself in them, modified but not absorbed ... [F]or a moment the identification is complete; and then a consciousness of contrast springs up between the reports of external objects brought to the mind by the sense and those which it has been accustomed to receive; and this consciousness gives to the description a most poetical colouring.[147]

More emphatically than in Hallam, the poet is here understood as experimenting not merely with some adventitious interior state of the other, but its entire conditions of identity. In precisely the same sequence as Hallam, however, this experimentation concludes with the implicit enunciation of the poet's own condition of identity, as tension grows between the stretching of consciousness and its habitual shape. Poems in this mode again constitute the poet's interiority in the way we have examined throughout this section. This interiority has the characteristics of the subject of discipline: it is an autonomous and complex whole made up of sensory perceptions, and emotional and intellectual responses, in interaction with an environment. It is constituted in poetry as a singular form associated uniquely with the poet: it is, in other words, individualised. At the same time, it is not seen continuously (or indeed, directly, at all), but is thought nonetheless to be known and gauged accurately in the structure and pattern which sums up its totality. Finally, it is necessarily also — though here only implicitly — the object of a normalising knowledge. In both theorists there is a rhetorical hesitation between seeing the observing consciousness as one which is simply the poet's, and seeing it as one who represents a standard readership in some way (the "latent knowledge" of "our

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[147]W. J. Fox, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 216.

change" etc.; the universalising "thinking principle"). The hesitation means, in effect, that the subjectivity of the observing consciousness is *both* the poet's and the poet's as representative of a standard consciousness. In other words, it is the poet's subjectivity being revealed under a normalising gaze.

Poetry as Normalised Consciousness

We have now seen that, in poetics which form part of the discursive context of *Idylls of the King,* one of the epistemological conditions of poetry is a particular kind of construction of the author's subjectivity. This condition is one way in which the total transactional system of poetry directly surveys the object of its power, that is, directly knows the subjectivity of discipline. It involves the construction of the poet's subjectivity both as an example of the subjectivity of discipline and as an object of a gaze (emanating from the structural position of the readership) which construes the appearance of the poet as an individualised and normalised entity. We have also seen, however, that this epistemological condition does not mean the total and continuous visibility of the author's *consciousness* to the reader. At first sight, this is paradoxical. Poetry notates how things appear in the "humid light" that is consciousness when it surges with the "mists and glittering *iris*" of personality.[148] Inevitably, this is not just information about the way objects deform, it is information about the subject which does the deforming. But if poetry does not exactly reveal the author's interiority, to whom or to what belongs the interiority it does reveal?

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[148]Thomas de Quincey, "The Poetry of Pope", op. cit., 302.

This question introduces the second way in which the total transactional system of poetry directly surveys the subjectivity of discipline. With all these poetics, readers do not go to poetry solely or even primarily to become intimate with the writer. They do not seek acquaintance with subjective states whose only singularity is that they belong to a particular person. Rather, poetry is instructive because it allows us to explore states of mind which are representative — sometimes alien states, sometimes states we aspire to.[149] To achieve this, theorists posit that poets turn a particular kind of gaze upon the flow of cognitive subjectivity in general. Taking the interiority of a "healthy" subject, a "noble" subject, a "poetic" subject, or of a subject typical of some historical, social or psychological condition, poets "inspissate and crystallize" some manifestation of it. The conditions that attach to this activity, like the conditions which attach to the appearance of the poet's subjectivity, have disciplinary characteristics. On the one hand, the subjectivity poets examine has the general structure of the subject of discipline. It is the interiority of an autonomous subjectivity, in its complex sensory, emotional and intellectual correlates. Secondly, just as with their own subjectivity, they do not reproduce this subject's chaotic, multi-layered, fuzzy-edged flux of perception. They reproduce instead a cleaned up and reorganised simulacrum of it: bounded spans of generically labelled interiority which can be viewed as unified, particularised and totally visible wholes. In other words, for expression of the mind's "humid light" to become poetic knowledge, poets must carve mind up according to the categories of an individualising, normalising and panoptic

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[149]See Isobel Armstrong's introductory essay in *Victorian Scrutinies* (op. cit.) for a lengthy discussion of the tension between these two interests in Victorian poetics between 1830 and 1870. She traces a shift of emphasis over the period from the latter to the former.

surveillance. They must show either the characteristic subjectivity of a particular type of personality or the characteristic patterns of a phase of subjectivity in general (that is, of a subjectivity which is thought of as available to any and all subjects). Poetry therefore notates not one but two figures which are both instances of the subjectivity of discipline, and which are both observed according to the forms of disciplinary knowledge. One is the particular phase of general interiority the poem expresses, the other is the activity of the eye separate to the former but able to roam within it, observing, classifying and judging according to an external canon of cognitive value. It is the experience of this knowledge as a whole that causes the normalising effect of poetry on the subjectivity of discipline as it arises in readers. What this means is that the transactional system of poetry as a whole is a circuit in which the subjectivity of discipline is both the object of knowledge and the object of power.[150]

A number of further observations emerge from this analysis. The first of these concerns Isobel Armstrong's arguments about the double poem, which are similar in a number of respects to what is set out above. The others, which will occupy us in the last two sections of the chapter, concern the transactional system in which the poet is bound according to the above model. (They concern the mode of observation by which poets acquire the epistemological wherewithal to represent individualised and normalised

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[150] The circuit is unusual, so far as discipline goes, because this object is not attached to any one subject in particular, but is both a general condition which all subjects inhabit, and one existing at a finer level of granularity than individual subjects. The reader is normalised not because poetry is an eye investigating him or her specifically, but because the reader identifies with the eye which normalises every experience he or she can pass through.

structures of consciousness, and the practice of the self which is associated with the accumulation and communication of that knowledge in poems.)

Armstrong suggests that Victorian poetry involves an expressive moment capped by an analytical moment. As above, this analytic moment is not identical with the limits of, and the ordering of the attachments inside, expressive consciousness which we examined in the last section. It is not the purging of distortions which derive from the intent to influence other people, nor is it the purging of valueless colouration's from the mind. Both these moves affect expression as it moves indifferently through every poem an author indites. They are what particularise whole œuvres as the work of one writer or another. Armstrong's moment of analysis is, instead, as in the system I have just outlined, an organisation of expressive consciousness which occurs within and up to the boundaries of individual poems. In hermeneutic terms, it means reading the words of a poem as a descriptive critique (in a Kantian sense) of the instant of consciousness it notates. In rhetorical terms, it is the manipulation of expression so that a subjectivity reveals the pattern of its conditions. This permits the expression of a state or instant of interiority to strike the reader not merely as expression but knowledge. As "double poem", poetry may combine phenomenological exploration with investigation of the cultural, linguistic and psychological determinants of consciousness. This means that it both de-naturalises any mode of interiority and (by staging the eruptive force of expression in the context of its conditions) loosens the determining hold of these conditioning structures. My argument differs from Armstrong in focusing not on this content or direction of the analytic moment, but on the mode of knowledge it invariably applies. In the poetics we are concerned with, irrespective of the political intentions of a poem's dissection of the conditions of "humid light", breakdown always proceeds according to a disciplinary

tactic. Analytic consciousness always approaches interiority as an object for individualising, normalising and panoptic knowledge.

This has important consequences for the relation between poetry and power. In particular it affects the possibility of resistance and opposition to hegemonic forms of social stratification within poetry — one of Armstrong's major claims for the double poem. In the light of her description, the double poem as a practised form is "sceptical". It pits a determined expressive movement against a determined movement of analysis, so that they struggle against and mutually undermine each other's authority. Because of the way analysis is conceived, this gives a formal point of entry for discursive resistance to economic, sexual, racial and gendered forms of hegemony extant in our own society as well as nineteenth-century Britain.[151] If we examine the mode of knowledge which

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[151]Conceptualisations of how to organise expressive consciousness relate critique to a socio-historical moment: it is always the critique which can be put forward at this point in time and place, according to present mores and sympathies, or present knowledge. To challenge this critique is therefore to challenge that structure of prevailing values, feelings and knowledge. In the main critics we have been concerned with (some of whom Armstrong does not examine in detail), concepts of the social bases of analysis may be summarised as follows. Hallam theorises the analysis of expression in terms of an organic notion of the historical development of conditions of perception. Mill and Fox are interested in association and its formulations through time. Keble theorises a poetic consciousness that plays against prevailing conditions of conception to deepen and expand their religious bias. Taylor structures expressive discourse in line with bits of knowledge derived from contemporary education. Patmore notes how hegemonic but socially varying conditions of communication elaborate transcendent perception. Wilson insists that poetic consciousness is one purged of all that offends hegemonic categories of feeling. de Vere's has expression organised around the communication of universal realities adapted to present or foreseeable common categories of perception.

relates the two planes of the double poem, however, a rather different power-effect emerges. The struggle between the phenomenological eruption of interiority and its conditioning socio-political structures does not take place on an open field. It takes place within a very specific polarity of subject and object: the disciplinary system of individualising and normalising surveillance. More pointedly, the moment it stages, the moment it allows us to read, never breaks out of this structure. Expressive consciousness, in the disciplinary double poem, does not exist beyond the analytic consciousness which oversees it. The wells of subjectivity never emerge autonomously, for the poem's articulation of the categories of socio-political structure always extends throughout its voicing of subjectivity. Conversely, analytic consciousness never voices itself except as a surveillance of this or that expressive moment. The enactment of prevailing systems of value in the double poem takes place only as knowledge of the substance given by expression. This mutual discursive dependence of subjectivity and conditioning social structure within a disciplinary gaze has two corollaries. One is that it stages both resistance to any particular social structure and the relativity of any particular experience with respect to social determinants, as Armstrong argues. Because discursive critique requires discursive subjectivity, the former is always vulnerable to the latter's solicitation of form.[152] But because subjectivity is never articulated outside the forms of critique, it can never be seen with the status of an absolute existential origin. More pointedly,

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[152]This is a word Derrida adopts in "Force and Signification" to describe how one may mount challenge to structure even though one cannot escape the peculiar limits of structure. In context it refers both to the moment of deconstructive philosophical analysis and the moment of deconstruction that the "force" of enunciation may perpetrate on the system of "signification" which articulates enunciation ("Force and Signification", *Writing and Difference*, trans. A Bass [Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1978], 3-30).

however, both the resistance and the relativity are only such as can occur in the environment of one tactics of power. Expressive subjectivity resists prevailing mores via the authority it gains when the disciplinary gaze solidifies and peculiarizes it as the subject of a socially sanctioned analysis. Similarly, analytic consciousness only posits interiority as encompassed and determined within the categories of prevailing social structure on the basis of the disciplinary gaze. It is the effect which occurs when this gaze classifies and ranks interiority on the basis of a visibility supposed to run into its essence and across its totality. In other words, while the double poem permits a resistance to particular strategic situations of hegemony, it involves no challenge to the tactics of power which these hegemonies draw on. Poetry conceived in this way is bound far within the evolution of the modern system of power. If it is to be more than power's repetition, it must break its own forms of authority. This, as we shall see in the next chapter, is the task *Idylls of the King* approaches.

Let us return to the question of the mode of knowledge poetry turns upon subjectivity in general, beginning with Mill, Fox and Hallam. For each, poetry as a specific form of knowledge is predicated on notation of perception as it emerges phenomenologically within the subject. For Hallam, this is particularly the motion and quality of the subject's cognition when it is charged with "love of beauty". For Mill and Fox, it is more generally cognition as it mutates under the "feelings" of an autonomous individual. Once again, in other words, poetry involves knowing the subjectivity of discipline. It takes as its object some moment of consciousness which is in relation to an environment, and which responds to that environment autarchically, and with the whole of its structure. In none of these theorists, however, does a poem simply reproduce, so far as symbolic language permits, the promiscuous, unfocussed continuum of the mind's

visions. On the contrary, before it appears in a poem, the poet must organise the flow of interiority s/he expresses in two connected steps. First, each poem is limited to the notation of a single, coherent and unified, "state" or moment of subjectivity. Second, each such representation must exemplify a generically possible development of human subjectivity, based in an overarching analysis not only of how and what interiority *can* be, but what is good and proper for it to be. The subjectivity of discipline in poetry, in other words, is expressed only insofar as it is exposed to an individualising and normalising knowledge which pre-arranges how it is to appear.

For Mill, this is as simple as the interaction of three uncomplicated nostra for good poetry. Any worthwhile poem is composed of the intellectual, emotional and sensory correlates of some "central and controlling thought or emotion".[153] It thus notates a "spiritual meaning" — namely, one possible experiential modification of the human mind as it is magnetized by a single stimulus. In a worthwhile poem, however, this is very rarely the projection of some united, sectioned-off instance of the poet's spontaneous experience, for such notations cannot be "understood" by readers whose "organisation" is different from the poet's.[154] It is instead consciousness whose boundaries the poet has elucidated for him/herself in a "philosophy" s/he has derived "from trains of reflection, from observation, analysis and generalisation".[155] It is, as such, a *typical* unit of subjectivity. It is in principle available to anyone; and forms an element in a

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[153]J. S. Mill, "Tennyson's Poems", op. cit., 415.

[154]ibid., 413-4.

[155]ibid., 413.

classification of human experience which has turned its manifold phenomenological flux into a table of generic forms. Ultimately, moreover, this "philosophy" entails not only that a poem's "vivid representation" typify and classify some "spiritual state" but that this "state" be "symbolical of [some] spiritual truth".[156] The knowledge of subjectivity poems embody does not merely lay out its universally possible modifications, but assimilates interiorities to the standards of "the everlasting reason of man".[157] It thus converts readers toward "the perfection of [their] nature".[158] It is, in other words, in two senses, a normalising as well as individualising knowledge. Poetry condenses the expression of subjectivity into the expression of a vast array of discrete instances of consciousness, each focused on a single point. These individualised moments are then grasped only insofar as they illustrate averaged-out modes of interiority, and these averaged states grasped furthermore as steps on the way to a model cognitive condition. As a result, poetry in Mill is predicated on a disciplinary analysis of consciousness, even though the aims of this analysis — the norms which govern Mill's idea of the model human condition — are impeccably anti-conventional, anti-reactionary, anti-oligarchical.[159]

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[156]ibid., 417.

[157]ibid., 417.

[158]ibid., 414.

[159]Mill calls immediately popular poetry "necessarily ... trite". He also insists that poets must avoid being influenced in their philosophical reasoning by what is "captivating to an imagination, biased perhaps by education and conventional associations" ("Tennyson's Poems", op. cit., 399, 417).

Hallam and Fox proffer more elaborate versions of the same system, differing from Mill on the complexity of the devices poetry has to individualise the subjectivity it expresses and the political and cultural specificity of the normalising analysis in which it places them. Both, however, like him, normalise the poetic expression of consciousness in the sense of imagining that it evolves, rather than simply reflects, hegemonic norms of perception. For Hallam, the individualisation of aesthetic perception is a function of poetry's availability to all morally unjaundiced readers. Aesthetic consciousness in poems is "multiplied, ... minute, and ... diversified". Though far from a reader's habitual crudeness of perception, it can nonetheless always be explored, because it turns in each specific poem on only one, relatively accessible "leading sentiment".[160] All of the poem's discursive pathways connect to this as to a royal road, at once illuminating and complexifying it. From a slightly different direction, the same process emerges in Hallam's descriptions of new structural devices in Tennyson. Lyric and drama combine when poetic cognition celebrates the beauty of single, newly idealised types of character, or embodies "the leading sentiment" in single "moods of character".[161] The poem's cognitive object (subjectivity which sees and celebrates beauty in things) is conceived, as in Mill, as a series of unique entities, whose boundaries knowledge must reflect. Fox replicates these epistemological tactics. He sees any one poem as the ordering of discourse which "should express, recall, or excite a sentiment" into the temporal unity of a single "narrative, or drama" of consciousness and the conceptual unity of a "philosophical

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[160]A. H. Hallam, op. cit., 88-9.

[161]ibid., 99, 93.

fact".[162] In addition to the unifying devices we have already seen Fox suggests the mode of cognition of a single other, "the different modifications of thought and feeling which flow from [a moral system], as observation is directed to different characters", and the arc of circumstantial response (a series of moods one mind undergoes in a given situation).[163] With each device, the consciousness that poetry expresses is treated in the same fashion: as a separate block with a single point of convergence, and thus as a collection of individualised moments.

Hallam and Fox, like Mill, go on to expose these discrete moments of subjectivity to a normalising (though not conventionalising) judgement. Fox insists that the poetic representation of a "mental phenomenon" illustrates a "science of man" concerned with the understanding of "mind". This science, he continues, delineates "human nature, its constitution and history, its strengths and weaknesses, its capabilities and destinies".[164] Though poetry is thus given an inexhaustible supply of new subjects, it does not, in other words, comprise a free recording of experience. Poetry follows where "science of man" leads. Any subjective entity it reveals must therefore fit in science's classificatory mechanism. This, as we can see above, is one which relates all of consciousness to the problem of its generic place ("human nature"), the hierarchy of its potential forms ("its strengths, ... weaknesses, ... capabilities") and the eventual construction of an ideal subject

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[162]W. J. Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", 4-5, 22-3.

[163]ibid., 10-11, 20, 24; cf. W. J. Fox, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 213-4, 218, 220-1.

[164]W. J. Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 5.

("its ... destinies").[165] More overtly than Mill, Fox further specifies that poets order their representation of subjective states for a politically progressive perfecting of human nature.[166] Poetry thus remains normalising even while roving beyond the dominant subjective forms of its readership.

Hallam, on the other hand, defining poetry as the expression of aesthetic consciousness, does not normalise poetic interiority by seeing it as an instrument for the communication of "philosophy" or "science". Normalisation nonetheless proceeds in two different steps, as Hallam explains why poetry as the expression of "exquisite sentiments of pleasure and pain" may be unpopular but still available to a universal human subject.[167] Interiority charged with "love of beauty" is not presented in poems as the prerogative only of the poet and people of exactly like endowments and identity as the poet. It is, instead, provisionally accessible to anyone. A poet's "impressions" are "multiplied, ... minute, and ... diversifed", but "Every bosom contains the elements of those complex emotions which the artist feels".[168] This does not mean that any human subject will automatically trace the "suggestions" of any other human subject. The "elements" of "complex emotions", which are the possession of all, are "physical": the material base of senses, association and nervous response which grounds any interior

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[165]Working out this hierarchical model, indeed, "almost identifies poetical with religious inspiration" (W. J. Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 5).

[166]W. J. Fox, "Tennyson's Poems", op. cit., 224.

[167]Hallam, op. cit., 88.

[168]Hallam, op. cit., 88-89.

state. To follow their combination, however, is conditional on the reader avoiding "habits, ... prejudices, or ... circumstances" which render it "*morally* impossible" to "apprehend [the] leading sentiment in the poet's mind".[169] Hallam's hermeneutics turn on this tension and negotiation between the individual culture of the poet and that of his/her readership. Certain organisations of association cannot place themselves in a poem's initial "point of vision" — the one from which "understand[ing] and sympathiz[ing] with" aesthetic consciousness is merely the effort of following a complex sequence. Poetry, in this sense, demands a normalisation of the gaze which approaches it. The limits of the potential states of the poet's and the readers' interiorities must overlap, or there is no area of subjective experience where the latter can meet the former before being taken on the journey of aesthetic appreciation. The consciousness which poetry expresses, in other words, must be organised around a "leading sentiment" which exists in a middle ground between the prevailing mores of the day and some absolute eccentricity of poetic experience.

The very "leading sentiment" which objectifies aesthetic interiority as an individualised form thus also objectifies it as a generic form. That these generic forms of aesthetic appreciation are also grasped by a gaze which measures them as steps on the way to a model form of interiority is clear from two further developments of Hallam's hermeneutics. First, Hallam distinguishes the artistic skill involved in poetry which takes "the usual passions of the heart, ... in a simple state, without applying the transforming powers of the imagination" from that involved in poetry which takes an unusual passion,

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[169]ibid., 89.

and thus involves "effort of will ... to follow the artist".[170] The more outside "daily experience" the "leading sentiment" — so long as it remains within the reach of "common" experience — the more "elevat[ed]" the poem is.[171] Aesthetic consciousness is thus normalised according to a criteria of increasing complexity, increasingly "minute" diversification from elements of "common nature". That is to say, the interiority poetry expresses is not merely seen as an individualised moment of normally accessible (rather than purely personal) subjectivity, it is seen as a moment in a hierarchy of increasingly refined levels of perception of that normality. This is further specified by the final movement of Hallam's thinking, which both brings out the political implications of poetic consciousness, and reveals it, in comparison with Fox and Mill, as part of a relatively unsystematic project of normalisation. Both the latter, theorising poetry's instrumental status with regard to a "philosophy" or "science" of man, project the normalisation of expression in poetry against the background of a highly methodical exploration of subjectivity. Hallam, however, understands the complexities of interiority revealed in poetry as elements of a more ad hoc accumulation of "knowledge and power" in the historical evolution of mass national ideology. Once, the poet's "lofty and profound observation" permeated mass consciousness, giving to it a leaven of "intense thoughts" which still outlasts "custom" as an element of "national existence".[172] Now, the recondite interiorities poets express become the seeds of future habits of feeling and appreciation. What modern poets fix as a "force of association" filters through the work

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[170]ibid., 93.

[171]ibid., 90.

of their epigones, eventually entering the experience of society at large.[173] The object of poetic knowledge in Hallam, in other words, is observed through a prism of normalisation which stretches and unfolds across time. Over the long haul, no aesthetic consciousness — even what the half poet records — fails to display some part of the accumulating pattern of national values. While this is by no means the projected rationalist and positivist grid of "philosophical fact" through which the two utilitarian critics glimpse a universal teleology for human nature, it is a vision of poetry as inditing step after step of a model human consciousness. It is simply that the model is not that of a transcultural identity, but that of the identity of a nation: its ever more refined, though as knowledge piecemeal, "habits, ... prejudices, and ... circumstances [of subjectivity]".

In conservative poetics of feeling the same system emerges, but tied to a moment of normalisation which is explicitly religious and/or emphatically a reflection of hegemonic norms of perception in society at large. Poetry depends for its force and specificity on notating an expressive consciousness. This consciousness is revealed in individual poems, however, only insofar as it has been filtered through an individualising, normalising and totalizing gaze, supposedly wielded by the poet. Let us begin with John Wilson. As we have seen, poetry is for him the discourse of a soul "musically tempered to repose", at its characteristic best and thus at its most open to truth. He also constantly emphasizes the autonomy of this expressivity with respect to cognition of the phenomenal world. Subjectivity is allowed into poetry, however, only under two further conditions.

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[172]ibid., 90-91.

[173]ibid., 91-92; Hallam has Wordsworth in mind here.

The first is made clear in Wilson's approving citation of Robert Montgomery's canons for the composition of hymns. Such poems need the literary quality of lyric unity as well as doctrinal rectitude and sincere religious feeling. Unity is defined in a way which recalls one of Fox's notions of structure: not the expression of single "feelings", but an individualised unit of utterance to which every element of a poem is subordinate. A hymn, like all poems, should be the "manifest gradation" of "thoughts" connected to a "simple, not complicated" subject, the whole series having palpable closure to the reader. In other words, the continuous experience of piety is broken down into smaller and smaller fragments, and around each such fragment are gathered only such cognitions as support a "satisf[ying]" and "complete" knowledge of it and it alone.[174] The flow of cognition is thus individualised, not in the sense of being made unique to a particular person, but in the sense of being made into isolated states, each observed for itself. A second condition of poetic consciousness emerges in reviews of Tennyson and Coleridge. Wilson couples the notion that poetry expresses the best moments of subjectivity with three others: the idea that this enables intimacy with subjectivity, that it allows us to judge subjectivity in a sub-lunar echo of the Last Judgement, and that it occurs only if the poet properly fulfil his "vocation".[175] This suggests two ways of understanding poetic interiority as filtered by a normalising moment, applied conscientiously by the poet. On the one hand, subjectivity in poetry is tested according to the rank of the feelings and truths it is open to in traditional Christian terms. Thus, for instance, Wilson takes Wordsworth to task, in *The Excursion*, for invoking the muse of Christian poetry (Urania)

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[174]John Wilson, "Sacred Poetry", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 24 (December 1828), 931.

[175]John Wilson, "Coleridge's Poetical Works", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 36 (October 1834), 542.

but expressing an interiority only responsive to "natural" rather than "revealed" religion.[176] Wordsworth's poem is at a high level of achievement, but not the highest. On the other hand, subjectivity is tested by a slightly more inclusive notion of valuable feelings — what enables the common reader to feel affection for the poet. The Tennyson review develops the characteristics of this mode of normalisation. Tennyson is vilified for a poetry which appears to pride itself on idiosyncrasy and the parvenu affectation of sophisticated emotion, rather than seeking feelings which all can feel and celebrate.[177] The "musically tempered" subject, in other words, is to be allowed into poetry only in terms of a hierarchy which privileges states of feeling as they approach closer and closer to the definitions of a generic social identity. Thus Wilson ridicules Tennyson's otiose drinking and fighting songs because they do not render the feelings of patriotism and conviviality rousing, scorns "The Kraken" because it seems to him no clear mystic vision, but praises the "Ode to Memory" because it "musically" represents the experience of important conservative truths about the domestic and rural origins of peace.[178]

These two modes of normalisation, as well as the objectification of interiority under an individualising gaze, receive progressively more emphatic exposition in the conservative criticism of Henry Taylor, Aubrey de Vere and Coventry Patmore. Taylor, writing as the late Romantic becomes Victorian, sees poetry as modulating the emotive

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[176]John Wilson, "Sacred Poetry", op. cit., 925-28.

[177]John Wilson, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 31 (May 1832), 721-41; in Armstrong, *Victorian Scrutinies*, op. cit., 107, 109.

[178]ibid., 109-10, 117-18.

and sensational flux evoked by Shelley, Byron and Keats to "sound judgements". Interiority in poetry must not exist for the reader as a musical drift of consciousness, without focus or adequate cause in the light of a "rational" and "masculine" analysis of its origins.[179] Rather, it must exist as the alliance of autonomous "imaginative" vision and "permanent impressions, .. recurring thoughts, ... pregnant recollections".[180] Poetic subjectivity, in other words, must be a flow of cognition reduced to a succession of well-defined packets of knowledge and value. What these "permanent impressions" should consist of is not particularly clear in the 1833 Preface — the criticism Tennyson responded to. They are something the common reader can recognise, and depend on the poet acquiring an extensive intellectual culture.[181] Later reviews of Wordsworth theorise this normalisation more extensively. Taylor compares the philosophical claims of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's poetry. The latter fails because its insights are governed by a criteria of intellectual "brilliancy" rather than "justness".[182] Wordsworth, conversely, is committed to ideas and moral percepts which Taylor says have survived the crucible of real, broad-based, time-honoured social transaction: "the checks and responsibilities of life".[183] This methodizes the reactionary biases evident in Taylor's poetry. The fullness of subjectivity poetry expresses is to be gathered around such perceptions as relate what is

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[179]Taylor, Preface to *Philip van Artevelde*, op. cit., xii, xvi.

[180]ibid., xix-xx.

[181]ibid., xii-xiv, xix-xx.

[182]Henry Taylor, "Wordsworth's *Sonnets*", op. cit., 11-13.

[183]ibid., 11.

usually true in society as it has appeared up to the present. Interiority, in other words, may only enter poetry as part of a vision which appraises inner states in the terms of traditional moral hierarchies. Appropriately, it is just such a project which Taylor's criticism carries out: explaining the moral hierarchies apparent in Wordsworth, and arguing through the question of their proper or improper emphases.

de Vere and Patmore, as befits their Tractarian interests, couple a similar analysis of poetry's basis in the socially normative with the notion that poetry should be religious in its tendency. They differ from both Taylor and the avant-garde critics in acknowledging that poetry may not be immediately popular though still humanly normal, yet insisting that great poetry always finds its way to the heart of the common reader.[184] At the same time, both discuss much more explicitly than Taylor the question of the unity of specific poems.[185] de Vere, we recall, sees poetry as the expression of visionary consciousness. It is a discourse of the cognitive "elevat[ion]" but not "exalt[ation]" of "Nature": of an "inspiration" second only to that divine afflatus which comprised the transcendental revelations of the Bible.[186] It represents a subjectivity filled with perceptions of what is "noblest" in the human world, or of an "ideal" society between

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[184]Taylor's first *Quarterly* review of Wordsworth confronts as an anomaly that poet's continuing lack of universal popularity.

[185]Taylor does remark that the "poetic mind" is formed into "crystals" in short poems ("Wordsworth's *Sonnets*", *Quarterly Review*, 69 [December 1841], 2), and commends long poems which have "no points, no prominences ... which shall *arrest* attention and extract admiration for parts to the injury of the rest" ("Wordsworth's *Poetical Works*", *Quarterly Review*, 52 [November 1834], 351).

"heaven" and "earth".[187] Yet this subjectivity may not enter poetry without further ado. In essays which attempt to cover all the genres of contemporary poetry, de Vere consistently insists that it must first be individualised by developing poetic unity as a criteria for individual poems. *Edwin the Fair* (a historical drama by Henry Taylor), for instance, is expounded as a poem held together throughout its discursive sweep by the working out of a single one of the principles of value which governs historical life.[188] Looser canons are also theorised. A good sonnet "rest[s] on a single idea, ... viewing it in all its aspects, rather than ... as a stepping stone to other ideas".[189] Narrative in general is "a chain of phenomenal causation [which] rest[s] on a moral support and illustrates character" — an evaluative knowledge which incorporates a succession of responses to a unified stimulus.[190] All poems also exhibit "truth of keeping". They must adjust their cognitive elaboration of any one of their elements so that it is appropriate to all the others. They thus illuminate only what is required for their own balance, never the whole domain of truth, or the careering eddies of "inspired" consciousness.[191] Even where poetry is not theorised specifically as the revelation of one "bit" of value, in other words, it is understood as a honed expression of evaluative subjectivity. These focused packets of

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[186]Aubrey de Vere, "Landor's Poetry", op. cit., 412; "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 363.

[187]Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 410.

[188]Aubrey de Vere, "*Edwin the Fair*", op. cit., 358-9.

[189]Aubrey de Vere, "Hartley Coleridge", *Edinburgh Review*, 94 (July 1851), 79-80.

[190]Aubrey de Vere, "Landor's Poetry", op. cit., 421.

[191]Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 376-8.

consciousness must also pass through yet another filter before entering poetry. Short poems, says de Vere, are more likely to be good poems than long works. They brook no deviation from "the common ground of reality", no release of poetic consciousness into the elaboration of its own idiosyncrasies.[192] Subjectivity, in other words, is not merely normalised as metaphysical vision. The vision itself is normalised by being permitted only in terms and values which are available to the common reader. This does not equate poetry with the repetition of conventional morality, pop psychology and traditional forms. de Vere states that recondite forms of vision, derived sincerely from a poet's experience, may initially fail of being understood, but become understood eventually.[193] The poet thus brings new areas of human experience, new swathes of phenomenal Nature, into the corral of hegemonic moral measurement. S/he inadvertently anticipates (though not, as in Hallam, brings about) the future development of socially normative perception of human nature. Patmore, finally, elaborates an even more cleanly articulated version of these ideas. He locates poetry as expression of subjectivity in two ways, one of which directly indicates that it is always an individualised packet of expression, one of which indicates that it is always normalised. Any poem, he explains, is the associative divarification of a single, germinal "Idea" in the poet's head.[194] Another way of putting this is to say that poetry revives the "world of feeling" in the terms of analysis provided by "the world of thought", elucidating the proper place of particular interior states as elements of a

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[192]Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 353.

[193]Aubrey de Vere, ibid., 379; "Landor's poetry", op. cit., 430-1.

[194]Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Poems — The Princess*", *North British Review*, 9 (May 1849), 52.

universal human subject.[195] Ultimately, this does not merely mean averaging out the poet's perceptions so that they become generically available to the common reader, but relating interior states on a scale which measures man's greater or lesser distance from God. Poets, he says, should decide whether a subjectivity is worth expressing, renewing the religious dedication of Art by applying to all feelings the test of Beauty as "Life expressed in Law".[196]

Let us turn to a brief consideration of Keble and Masson: critics for whom poetry is a displaced release of pent-up emotional pressures. Both also theorise this subjectivity as emerging under the evaluative filter of an individualising and normalising gaze. Keble, for instance, states that lyric poems express a "single jet" of emotion, while long ones indite the unique complex of habitual feelings which comprises an individual poet's identity.[197] He insists, furthermore, that the discourse of a truly sincere poet — one who only writes with a view to unburdening him/herself — is marked by indifference to effect, and therefore by a return to intense feelings which everyone experiences.[198] Poetry constantly expresses interiorities which everybody knows as more or less valuable. It is, in other words, a discourse in which the flux of subjectivity appears only as discrete, individualised states, and only as it meets the ghostly criteria of hegemonic norms. This differs from the writers we have already examined in placing the disciplinary movement

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[195]Coventry Patmore, "Poetry — the Spasmodists", op. cit., 232, 238-9.

[196]Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Poems — The Princess*", op. cit., 48; "*In Memoriam*", op. cit., 533.

[197]John Keble, *Praelectiones Academicae*, op. cit., 90.

not in a split consciousness, as in Patmore and Taylor, or a decision to pass over what is abnormal, as in Wilson and de Vere, but in the very expressiveness of poetic interiority. For Keble, there is no urge to write, except when the conditions of individualisation and normalisation have been met. Masson gives a more complex version of this analysis. The cause of any poem, for him, is a unique amalgam of "feelings and longings", which have reached such critical mass in the poet that they demand release. Each poem notates only that "mood" which it is compelled cathartically to vent, distributing, crystallising and objectifying one pattern of interiority through every detail of its discursive structure.[199] There is also the question, however, of what Masson calls the "pitch of feeling" at which any one poet is impelled to objectify consciousness.[200] Calibrating this introduces a normalising movement into poetic expression. Poetry of lasting influence, for Masson, is the product of consciousness which achieves critical expressive mass only around the most "important" issues of human existence. One may thus rank poets and poems according as they commemorate response to adventitious moments or response to the "Cabinet questions" of life.[201] (Masson offers little guidance about these: they are not defined in his discourse either by an appeal to religious experience or to the common experience of the readership.) For him, as for Keble, in other words, the motive within

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[198]ibid., 71.

[199]David Masson, op. cit., 318.

[200]ibid., 321-2.

[201]ibid., 323.

subjectivity for expression carries in itself the principle of an individualisation and normalisation of subjectivity.[202]

Carlyle's poetics pose a different problem. For him, poetic knowledge is not so much knowledge of the minds which observe the world, as a particular way of knowing the world itself. Like all valuable discourse, it involves an "Intellect" which "penetrates" into the mystic "Open Secret" of the Universe, into the "inner heart" of a thing, "the harmony that dwells there". Revealing this "meaning" is the Poet's vocation.[203] However, as in Keble and Masson, there is for Carlyle no poetic discourse except discourse which expresses a revealed consciousness which is at once "inspissated and crystallized", and reflects the conclusions of some normative perceptual grid. Poetry,

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[202]Other statements of poetry as an individualisation and normalisation of consciousness appear in the reviews. John Sterling, for instance, ("Tennyson's Poems", *Quarterly Review*, 70 [September 1842], 385-416) looks to poetry to transform the garish, conflictual spectacle of modern life into "graceful and expressive forms" of "crystalline clearness". This transformation is, however, a turning of "shifting and mingled matter" into a "fixed" shape. It is the magnetisation of consciousness to a unified locus. (Sterling's review is reprinted in Armstrong, *Victorian Scrutinies*, op. cit., 125-47.) Sara Coleridge, in similar vein, explains the specificity of poetic cognition as the capacity to present "the loveliest and happiest aspect of things", but complains that Wordsworth's later poems are mere "aggregate[s]" of such "thoughts and images", not "evolved from a central idea ... [into] a distinct whole, strongly individualised" ("Tennyson's *Princess: A Medley*", *Quarterly Review*, 82 [March 1848], 427-53). There is also the tighter vein of fascination Hutton describes: the examination of truth's "microscopic" appearance, its emanations in the mind round a "single point" ("Poetry by Coventry Patmore", *North British Review*, 29 [May 1858], 529-46).

[203] Carlyle, *On Heroes etc.*, op. cit., 105.

after all, is an exemplary revelation of consciousness in relation to an environment. Specifically, it expresses "the sacred mystery of the Universe" in its "aesthetic aspect", revealing "what we are to love",[204] with this judgement not just embodying any "theorem of the world and of himself" (or any aspect of one) which a subject has genuinely believed.[205] In other words, poems may only express cognitions which have already been tested against an external set of norms. Moreover, poetry is specified as a musical discourse, one of whose most important traits is formal unity — what Carlyle calls "true inward symmetry" and "architectural harmony".[206] This need for "inward symmetry" means that cognitions are excluded or added to a poem not only for their "truth", but for their contribution to the epistemological shape whose site is the poem. They must be such cognitions as together create "a real self-supporting whole".[207] The *poetic* truth of an insight depends on its insertion in a symmetric structure of this sort and rests on its relation to just those other insights, dependent on it in their turn for poetic truth, which give the sense that nothing essential has been left out of the discourse and nothing

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[204]ibid., 80-81.

[205]The phrase is from "Corn-Law Rhymes", op. cit., 339.

[206]"The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested; not *said*, or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence; but *sung*, in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings* not of the voice only, but of the whole mind." "Burns", op. cit., 286-7.

[207]"Burns", op. cit., 285.

inessential allowed in.[208] As Carlyle notes of "the most finished, complete, and truly inspired pieces of Burns", this entails the "vehemence and entireness" of a poetic consciousness, not simply the depth of its penetration.[209] In Burns's lyrics is "a tone and words for every mood of man's heart". But it is only a single mood, in its superlative (most characteristic, most normal) state, for each lyric: "a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy, he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or slyest mirth".[210] Poetry, then, is divided into singular, unified bits of the cognition of value, and is not a random sweep of penetrative "Intellect" over things. It is a discourse in which the subjectivity of discipline (in the form of Carlyle's existential subject) becomes known as an individualised and normalised entity: only discrete, integrated aggregations of it becoming known, only examples of it which express a true view of things.

Poetry as Normalising Objectification

I want now to turn to some other aspects of the epistemological practice we are concerned with. These are not matters of the mechanism in which each poem contributes to a surveillance of the subjectivity of discipline. They are not characteristics of the expressive subjectivity particular poems record. They are, instead, matters of the epistemological practice a poet is engaged in as a prior activity to writing poems, the

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[208]Thus the "Three compartments" of the *Divine Comedy* "mutually support one another, are indispensable to one another. The *Paradiso*, a kind of inarticulate music to me, is the redeeming side of the *Inferno*; the *Inferno* without it were untrue". *On Heroes etc.*, op. cit., 96.

[209]"Burns", op. cit., 286-7.

[210]"Burns", op. cit., 287.

epistemological practice which is the condition of writing poems effectively. They concern the way a poet must look at his or her physical and social environment, other people, and his or her self in order both to acquire and to communicate any morsel of the knowledge of the subjectivity of discipline. There are two major branches of this practice. One is the way poets must observe the actual epistemological object of poetry. How, that is, do poets investigate subjectivity so that they can disseminate it in poems? The other is the way poets are to observe things which may become evocatory symbols of subjectivity — things whose representation in poems allows readers to identify and inhabit subjectivity. How, that is, do poets take cognisance the world of natural forms and human interaction which provides them with the material of lyric expostulation and narrative? There are two characteristics applying to both branches of this epistemological practice which are important for a study of Idylls of the King. On the one hand, they are themselves a form of disciplinary knowledge: that is, they depend upon an individualising and normalising gaze. Secondly, however, they depend upon an accurate gauging of their objects as individual and normal entities which either does not derive from a panoptic surveillance or cannot be communicated as one. As we have noted before, it is this mode of surveillance and its expression with which Tennyson is concerned in Idylls.

Let us begin with the first branch of the poet's epistemological practice. For all the theorists I have been considering, the knowledge of subjectivity poets promulgate is derived fundamentally from their knowledge of their own minds. In part this is a matter of the lyric bias of much early Victorian theory. Whether as soliloquizers in Mill's vein, as love-poets turning a thoughtful retrospective gaze on passion, as heroes telling out what is truly in them, as aesthetically sensitive beings letting their rapture flow naturally, or as men driven by emotional stress to pour forth feeling in roundabout utterance, poets

draw on what they have experienced "at first hand". Although there are very particular rules about autobiographical expression — the subjectivity reported in poetry must reflect only what is fundamental to the poet's character, not what is adventitious or opportunistic — it is still the poet's own subjectivity which is quarried. Moreover, knowledge of subjectivity is held to derive from the poet's own experience even where the subjectivity in a poem is not presented as the poet's own. This is a result of the analysis of dramatic projection and empathy which these theorists subscribe to. Poets construct the subjectivity of the other as an imaginary experience in themselves before they sum it up for their readers. They either visualise themselves inside the "senses, feelings, nerves and brain" which condition the alien experience, or use the "analogy" of their own "senses, feelings, nerves and brain" as a basis for extrapolating it.

What this means is that every poetic genre, lyric or otherwise, depends upon one and the same relation between the knowledge of subjectivity in poems and the practice by which poets accumulate knowledge of subjectivity. Behind all poems is an activity of theoretically *panoptic* disciplinary scrutiny. The poet's consciousness is assumed to have watched flows of consciousness throughout their existence, as well as working out their divisions and unities, and relating them to whatever measure of value is thought to be correct. In a number of theorists this relation is indeed an explicit part of the structure of poems. Fox, Hallam, Wilson, Patmore and de Vere, for instance, all understand poems as formal representations of an autonomous observer within an experiencing consciousness, and identify the observer with the figure of the poet.[211] Whether as "transmigration",

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[211]Claire Berardini has discussed this with respect to the structure of the dramatic monologue. See Berardini, , "Tennyson and the Poetic Forms of Resistance", op. cit., 85.

Jove-like self-transformation,[212] or other mode of the poet "passing into the being of the other and retaining his own",[213] or as a hawk-eyed "self-consciousness" summoning experience back as memory.[214] poems both result from and structurally embody the poet's activity as a consciousness within consciousness. Even where this is not the case, this relation of continual surveillance is an implicit condition of poetry.[215] Poets may write of a feeling because they have experienced it or because they have drawn on the "*analogy*" of their own experience, using "imaginative induction" to extend themselves into an alien consciousness which has experienced the emotion. Knowledge the poet derives from his/her own experience derives from a surveillance of it which covers the whole of its span because it is what the poet has lived through. Knowledge of alien experience is identical because it depends upon comparison with and extrapolation from this ever scrutinized object.

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[212]See, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit. (Armstrong, *Victorian Scrutinies*, 112-3) for Wilson's protest at the materialist form of Fox's theory of the poet as transmuted but self-consistent. Wilson articulates the same structure of surveillance in an idealist form by referring to the self-transformatory powers of Jove (Armstrong, *Victorian Scrutinies*, 113).

[213]Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 404-5.

[214]Coventry Patmore, "*In Memoriam*", 551;"Poetry — The Spasmodists", op. cit., 232. See also, for instance, R. H. Hutton, "Poems by Coventry Patmore", *North British Review*, 28 (May 1858), 529-30.

[215]Taylor, for instance, claims that poetry's office, "seeing all things", is "to infer and instruct". "Preface", *Philip van Artevelde*, op. cit., xii.

To suggest that the knowledge on which poets base their representation of consciousness is conceived in panoptic fashion raises two further questions, both of which relate to the symbolic embodiment of this knowledge in poems. Although they depend on a temporally extended observation of consciousness, although they are intended to evoke completely observed moments of consciousness, and although they structurally present the observation of consciousness, no poem reproduces the temporal duration of panoptic surveillance. From a reader's point of view, in the epistemological mechanism of the poem, a discontinuous and foreshortened observation occurs, which stands in for the panoptic and must cover the same ground as it. This means that a poem requires a form of representation which enables an observer outside the poem (that is, the reader) to accumulate all the experience of disciplinary knowledge without expending all the time this particular epistemological practice requires. In terms of the knowledge poems give of the interiority of the poet, we have already seen that poems are regarded in this way. Poets indite a limited, discontinuous series of model moments of consciousness, which together cast a light on the entire structure of their inner being. What I now need to examine is the symbolic code which poets are supposed to use to pass on the experience of a panoramic insight into a moment of subjectivity, and to pass it on with the temporal condensation which makes poetry a worthwhile form of knowledge.

This symbolic code depends on two elements. It depends on the poet's knowing the appearance, essence and meaning of every human and natural phenomenon, and knowing what aspects of these phenomena will evoke that appearance, essence and meaning in an open mind. This is necessary because it is the total experience of the appearance, essence and meaning of the phenomena represented in a poem which, in the reader, evokes the shade of subjectivity it is a poem's task to communicate. Both these

knowledges are quite separate from the knowledge of interiority and perception which comprise poetry's analysis of expressive consciousness. As well turning on different aspects of a poem's discursive structure, they relate to a far wider range of objects, and a different epistemological project. However, their mode is again that of an individualising, normalising and panoptic surveillance. What is required is an understanding of, and an ability sharply to evoke, the appearances of nature, historical events, psychological and behavioural possibilities, social contexts, values, as they appear in a projected network of perception which involves what is physically typical as well as what is culturally typical.[216] This is not because all poets are supposed to perceive "nature and human life" in precisely the same pattern. The fact that there are, as de Vere puts it, "infinite" possibilities for seeing the real adequately is what permits a poet's mimetic work to reverberate with his individuality. Rather it is because, without this ground at once of vivid and commonly agreed perception, it would not be possible for a representation of the real to operate as a widely circulating symbolic language at all. Discussion of this mode of knowledge characteristically revolves around the quite limited, but relatively non-controversial, question of what kind of knowledge of natural phenomena poetry needs — but there are also discussions, regarding long poems particularly, about the knowledge of character and human interaction. Two underlying propositions permeate the texts I am concerned with. Poetry may never present either a natural object or human transaction except as the screen for a projection of values. At the same time, such objects may not be represented so that the reader loses a sense of what they are like as

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[216]Carol Christ, *The Finer Optic*, op. cit., touches on this notion of a phenomenal world which all experience physically in much the same way.

autonomous existences — their independence of the mind which confers value upon them or their possession of qualities proper to their singularity. The first point excludes from poetry any non-normalised knowledge of "Nature and human life", in whatever structural relation to a poem it crops up. The second entails that this knowledge is also always individualising.

Carlyle gives a straightforward example of this. It will be recalled that the Poet's vocation, for him, is the creation of new "intrinsic symbols", which enable the "Infinite", the world of values by which human lives are ordered, to become perceptible. We have also noted that an "intrinsic symbol" can do this because it is an object of sense which has a meaning of its own which fits the symbolic meaning. In "The Hero as Poet" Carlyle makes clear what the characteristics of this meaning must be. That is, he makes clear the kind of perceptual matrix by which the poet reads the world of nature and human interaction so as to communicate the consciousness of values. To see the "meaning" of an object is, for Carlyle, to have "penetrated into the inmost heart of the thing; detected ... the *melody* that lies hidden in it; the inward harmony of coherence which is its soul, whereby it exists, and has a right to be, here in this world".[217] The latter is a simultaneously individualising and hierarchizing (i.e. normalising) moment. As a movement beyond "Appearance" to the "vital type", it involves seizing only the "essential point ... leaving all the rest aside in surplusage". "This or that face" of a thing "dissolves" before the perfect poet "so that he discerns [its] perfect structure".[218] Insight into a

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[217] *On Heroes etc.*, op. cit., 81; 83. (Carlyle is citing Fichte.)

[218] *On Heroes etc.*, op. cit., 93-4; 104.

thing's unique existence, in other words, means reducing it to a single principle, discarding what does not agree with this principle as no part of its reality. This principle, however, not only composes the independent existence of a thing, but contains the mark of its value according to a hierarchy of Being whose criteria Carlyle rarely expands but which nonetheless exists. Inner "harmony" defines a thing's "right" to exist, not just its individuality. "Beauty" includes "Goodness". Poetic knowledge is "loving", to penetrate the depths, but also "just".[219] Poetic knowledge, in other words, dispenses with everything about an object that does not contribute to knowing it in terms of a certain ethical-ontological norm. It then places this knowledge as an apprehension of what defines the object's very autonomy: the "vital type" which governs it at all times and from

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[219] *On Heroes etc.*, op. cit., 81-2; 105.

within.[220] Carlyle's symbol is thus a form of disciplinary knowledge, turning upon any sensual object an individualising, normalising gaze.[221]

Similar points are repeated in the other critics we have been concerned with throughout this chapter. Fox, Mill and Hallam, for instance, approach the question with respect to the use of "sensuous imagery" as a means of communicating feeling to an audience. Hallam isolates as one of Tennyson's characteristic excellencies his capacity to turn "vivid, picturesque delineation" into representation "fused ... in a medium of strong

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[220]There are two ways in which this occurs. On the one hand, as with the "rigour" which places the "saddest tragedy" of Francesca in Hell, the type itself may be understood as more or less good. On the other, poetry makes objects "like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal; they show you the hour like others, and the inward mechanism also is visible". As such, it may reveal the distance between "what Nature meant" and the "rough embodiment" in which this "musical idea" has been "wrapped-up". In other contexts, Carlyle uses such a distance between actual achievement and inner "melody" to define value. (Nature's "inner structure" composes "Sphere-Harmonies". As such, "base, miserable [unharmonious] things" cannot be base because of their governing structure.) Similarly, biography measures people by the success — even presence — of their effort to live entirely in accordance with their own inner "melody". (See *On Heroes etc.*, op. cit., 83, 108.)

[221]Strictly speaking, the panopticism Foucault isolates in disciplinary institutions is either a material surveillance which is literally unceasing, the threat of one, or a regular assessment (the "examination"). However, what makes this panopticism effective is implied in Carlyle's mysticism: always knowing what the object is doing. Whenever the subject looks penetratingly, what determines the object becomes visible. At the same time, to have knowledge of this inner determination means that, even if one does not look, one knows exactly what the object is doing. The inescapability of the panoptic gaze, and the way it encompasses its object remain, even though the particular form of literally continuous observation does not.

emotion".[222] The mode of knowledge which poetry turns on the world (to be distinguished from the mode of knowledge which poetry turns on interiority) is thus individualising and normalising. On the one hand it beholds objects distinctly and in bold outline (poetic discourse consists of "vivid ... de-lineation"). On the other hand, it knows objects only as they fit the beholder's aesthetic sense (they are "picturesque") and as terms in one of those complex interior states Hallam calls poetic. With Fox and Mill, landscape is theorised even more extensively as a symbolic screen for interiority. Poetry, insists Mill, is not mere "description". It must add "spiritual meaning" to an exactness of "scene-painting" that he finds at its most superlative in early Tennyson: that is, in a mode which is not just "picturesque" but "statuesque", giving "each individual object ... in bold relief, with a clear decided outline".[223] Fox's criteria emerge most strongly in his rejection of "personification" as a means for representing emotion to the reader. The "soul" which is the poet's meaning is, for him, best communicated by having it "animate" representation of "some one of the innumerable shapes of loveliness ... in the material universe".[224] The poet has to evoke these shapes with the sharpness of "pictures" in the reader's mind.[225] In both critics, as in Hallam, the preference is for a poetry which reveals the normalised consciousness poetry expresses by representing the real world as it would be valued by

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[222]Hallam, op. cit., 93.

[223]Mill, "What is Poetry", op. cit., 399; "Tennyson's Poetry", op. cit., 415, 408. Compare, for the argument about description, Alexander Smith, "The Philosophy of Poetry", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 38 (December 1835), 828-29.

[224]William Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 7.

that consciousness. Yet, again as in Hallam, this must also enable the reader to imagine the forms of objects as they might appear to any consciousness, though with the added clarity and singularity an aesthetic focus gives perception.

Conservative criticism develops these ideas throughout the period we are concerned with by confronting the problem of solipsism in expressive poetry.[226] One of the elements of the value-charged subjectivity which it sees as the realm of poetry is the subject's proper epistemological relation to the world of objects. The subject neither projects its own state onto the world, nor exists as a mere tabula rasa upon which the world prints unevaluated forms. Rather, in poetry, Nature and human consciousness "wed", mutually illuminating each other. This occurs by having natural objects appear under an individualising gaze (to render their autonomy) and a normalising one (to render their status as the stage of human interiority). Taylor, at the very beginning of the period, marks this way of thinking as part of the turn from late-Romantic subjectivity. He objects to Shelley because the latter, as he sees it, "unrealizes every object in nature, presenting them under forms and combinations in which they are never to be seen through the mere medium of our eyesight ... [and] so decomposed from their natural order and coherency as to be brought before the reader in the likeness of a phantasma".[227] Though Shelley adapts landscape so that it matches the patterns of subjectivity, in other words, he does so

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[225]ibid., 4-5.

[226]Terry Eagleton *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* argues that the tension between subject and object is a contradiction derived from the imperatives of bourgeois acquisitiveness.

[227]Henry Taylor, "Preface" to *Philip van Artevelde,* op. cit., xviii.

in the wrong way. Normalisation is not balanced by sufficient respect for the autonomy of objects. This autonomy is defined as the reproduction of the "forms", "order" and "coherency" objects have in "nature". Poetry, in other words, must give objects according to the phenomenological shape which belongs to them, according to the sequence which belongs to them, and according to the unity which belongs to them. In representing objects so that they satisfy the "mere ... eyesight" it represents them in an individualising fashion, as entities with their own qualities, as well as qualities added to them by "imagination". The preferred mode is thus that of Wordsworth's sonnets, in which the mind "wedded" to Nature is impelled into "the regions of thought" by "some fact, transaction, or natural object": where consciousness knows objects as the screen for what we have already seen is normalised cogitation, but also as individual entities.[228]

Aubrey de Vere, in a review concerned wholly with "practical truth" (a knowledge of objects which makes poetry verisimilitudinous) gives details of an epistemologically more elaborate version of this way of thinking. In line with Tractarian interest in the Book of Nature, he insists that the phenomenal world is a skein of symbols, arranged by Providence to provide human cognition with constant images of moral and spiritual principle.[229] As such, to create a poetic landscape is not a process of invention, but of "subtraction" from the "multiform and ever-changing" face of a real "scene". Art "selects one meaning from nature's countless meanings, isolates it, and places it before us with a

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[228]Henry Taylor, "Wordsworth's *Sonnets*", op. cit., 13.

[229]Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 374-5; "Landor's Poetry", *Edinburgh Review*, 91 (April 1850), 411.

luminous precision and permanence". It "renders the scene ... more general, by divesting it of local and accidental particulars, [but] at the same time stamps upon the picture the unity of the genus".[230] In other words, poetic consciousness knows objects external to itself by grasping them in one movement as a unified and as an analogical whole. It sees nature with a gaze which at once individualises and normalises its object. Coventry Patmore, writing out of a concern with rather different elements of poetic discourse (rhythm, common-sense consciousness), nonetheless repeats these patterns with respect to the appearance of natural objects in poetry. Like Mill, Patmore insists that Art is more than "skilful imitation", like Taylor and de Vere he insists that it is not a projection of the poet's own mind. Art reproduces "forms" so that they are "suggestive". It "translates" the "truth and loveliness" of the "realities" of "Creation", those "hidden from the mass of men by dimness of sight or ... familiarity", but does not "impart" the beauty.[231] These "realities" fall into two classes: the types of "feeling" which all inhabit, which the poet gives comprehensively by "translating" them into the "world of thought"; and phenomenal objects — "the walls of space, ... the flowers of the green earth".[232] These are consummately related in the poetry of perfected subjectivity which Patmore describes emerging in *In Memoriam*. The poet sees interior states as objects, and the "outward world" only as "a magazine of symbols for revealing [this] inner world".[233] This gives us

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[230]"Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 374.

[231]Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 49-50; "Poetry — The Spasmodists", op. cit., 231.

[232]Coventry Patmore, "Poetry — The Spasmodists", op. cit., 231-2.

[233]Coventry Patmore, "*In Memoriam*", op. cit., 551.

a perception of nature in poetry as a normalised screen, as in Taylor and de Vere, but not as an individualising one.[234] This does emerge in his review of Maud, however. There, Patmore lists Tennyson's great characteristics as a poet. One of these, seen as the prerogative of a poetic consciousness in general, is a "microscopic eye" which observes "natural objects" in an "affectionately accurate and minute" way.[235]

Keble and Masson, in whom the being of poetic subjectivity is to normalise and individualise its self-expression, repeat the above analysis of the knowledge poetic subjectivity has of external objects. For Keble, as with de Vere, one element of this derives from a vision of nature as analogy. This does not necessarily emerge only in a religious context. It will be recalled that Keble rates Burns's mode of "descriptive poetry" above Cowper's. The latter "laboriously sketch[es] every object which comes in its way", because it needs to distract itself from its real state. The former gives objects via suggestive details which evoke just that aspect of them which "put[s] the reader's mind in unison with the writer's".[236] The problem is the opposite to what Taylor oppugns in Shelley. Cowper's Nature is highly individualised, but not in such a way as to invoke it along with a normalised emotional state. Burns, on the other hand, depicts only those objects which correspond to such states. The *Praelectiones Academicae*, generalising poetry as an imaginative consolation for the desires aroused by "absent objects", theorises a rather different, but still disciplinary, mode of appearance in poetry for the world of

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[234]This is unusual in the context of reviews of *In Memoriam*.

[235]Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Maud*", *Edinburgh Review*, 102 (October 1855), 499.

[236]Keble, "Sacred Poetry", op. cit., 217-18.

objects. The marks of sincere, and thus poetic, self-relief include a peculiar kind of description of those objects around which the poet's desire eddies. They are not described "minutely" but via qualities which belong idiosyncratically to them, and which the poet notices in preference to those qualities ordinary consciousness notes.[237] Where the world poetry depicts is in direct communication with the inner world of the poet, in other words, it individualises as well as normalises it.[238] David Masson goes much further than Keble, making any poetic representation of the phenomenal world part of the poet's self-objectification. All of poetry, we recall, is the creation of "fictitious concrete" as an "allegory" of a complex state of mind. It is a rifling of the whole gamut of human and natural objects, "up to the present", so that they reflect some normalised interiority.[239] What Patmore would call "reality", in other words, appears as the symbolic basis of all poetry. But it appears only under the condition that it correspond to subjectivity, and in the solid, particularized, apparently autonomous form that we call "concrete" rather than "abstract". Though for Masson, in other words, the mode of the "phantasmagoria" is a neutral description of all poetry, not a term of abuse for solipsistic verse, the underlying

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[237]John Keble, *Praelectiones Academicae*, op. cit., 77.

[238]Compare, here, Alexander Kinnear's and Aubrey de Vere's statements about the relation of lyric consciousness to representation. Both theorize lyric as a mode in which the individualizing and normalizing knowledge of objects we have been examining is manifested as the merging of the poet's consciousness with the thing his/her desire contemplates. See Aubrey de Vere, "*Edwin the Fair*", *Quarterly Review*, 71(March 1843), 352-3; Alexander Kinnear, "Life of Shelley", *Quarterly Review*, 110 (October 1861), 316. Sara Coleridge describes a similar mode in Shelley, but with less approval ("Tennyson's *The Princess*", *Quarterly Review*, 82 [March 1848], 435).

mode of knowledge poetry turns on the phenomenal world is again individualising as well as normalising.

Keble's and Masson's understanding of the relation between poetic consciousness and the world of objects includes human character and human interaction as well as landscape. Masson's "phantasmagoric" poetic language consists of "scenes ... incidents ... physiognomy and costume ... states of feeling [and] character".[240] Keble's "absent objects" include the "ideal features of true nobleness" which he sees Spenser as always returning to.[241] It is not merely biological, botanical and geological objects which poetry presents in a disciplined fashion, in other words, but social, historical and cultural ones. Hallam and de Vere have particularly interesting suggestions on the latter, theorising another site of discipline for them than occurs with natural objects. Each sees human characters and human transactions in poetry not only as part of a poetic whole which expresses some large normalised state of consciousness, but as in themselves normalised. These discussions are especially interesting for us, contextualizing the interest in "representative character" we noted in chapter one as part of the literary critical reaction to the Arthurian matter of *Idylls of the King*. Hallam, for instance, explains the excellence of "Orianna" and the series of poems of female character in terms of their knowledge of human objects as well as of the consciousness which responds to them. The latter are composed after a peculiar process of "observation and reflection". The poet

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[239]David Masson, "Theories of Poetry and a New Poet", *North British Review*, 19 (August 1853), 310-11.

[240]David Masson, op. cit., 313-4.

[241]John Keble, *Praelectiones Academicae*, op. cit., 70-1.

> collects the most striking phenomena of individual minds, until he arrives at some leading fact, which allows him to lay down an axiom, or law, and then, working on the law thus attained, he clearly discerns the tendency of what new particulars his invention suggests, and is enabled to impress an individual freshness and unity on ideal combinations.[242]

What Hallam describes is the production of objects which at once represent a normative state of character and are yet wholly individualised. In "Orianna" much the same process beds the poet's dealings with a rather more complex object: the forms of art of the past. The poet does not absolutely re-create a past literary form (here the "ballad"), but "transfer[s its] spirit, making it a temporary form for his own spirit, and so effect[ing], by idealising power, a new and legitimate combination".[243] Poetry "seizes" the "mood, not [the] execution" of a past form of art, and blends it as a mode of expression with the "art" of the "present". The poet, in other words, has turned the manifold manifestations of a past genre into a single "ideal" form, and added new characteristics which both fit it and expand it so that it becomes a "new" channel of consciousness. As with character, poetry deals with cultural objects not merely as a screen for normalised and individualised subjectivity. It constitutes the object as itself an individualised and normalised entity, elaborating it as a more clearly disciplined form than otherwise would appear.

de Vere's discussions of this process repeat his ideas about landscape. "The most common events in human life are instinct with latent principles", he notes. Poetry, like

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[242]Arthur Hallam, op. cit., 99.

[243]ibid., 89.

the Bible, therefore succeeds by "brief, luminous commentary on some casual occurrence", bringing out the "sublimest truths" of "Providence".[244] Similarly, "the ideal in character is attained without any sacrifice of the individual": "characters ... are not mere individual men, they belong at least to a generic, if not to a moral ideal, from which they have been subtracted".[245] Such "ideal" readings of social and psychological objects include the recreation of individualised norms of historical process and past modes of life and character. The poet of historical events, de Vere observes, may take one of two courses. S/he may alight on "strange escapes, sudden exaltations, unforeseen calamities" which "of themselves rivet ... our attention". Preferable, however, is to alight on a "period of social fermentation during which the national energies are evolving themselves according to some internal law; in which principles ... meet together in a war-struggle, and ... attest the great truth that the progress of nations ... is the progress of mind".[246] This conflict of principles gives "unity" to the discourse, "working its way in different characters according to their constitution, varying with their varieties, but everywhere active".[247] The historical poet, in other words, observes the past as it appears in poetry with a particularly focused and condensed version of the individualising and normalising eye of the historian. S/he ensures that the representation of events plays out "one" of the vast changes in administrative "principle" which are the essence of "political wisdom",

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[244]Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 363.

[245]ibid., 375; de Vere, "*Edwin the Fair*", op. cit., 353.

[246]Aubrey de Vere, "*Edwin the Fair*", op. cit., 358.

[247]ibid., 359.

and that the representation of people illustrate the modes by which the specificity of the past interacted with the myriad possibilities of "character ... founded on nature, and consistent with itself".[248] In order to achieve this unity, indeed, it is even permissible to break up and remould the phenomenological surface of events and evidence about historical personages. "The poet, by a selection of events not less ideal than his creation of character, and by a privilege of compression which connects historical facts with their moral causes, reduces the chaos of outward circumstance to order, and illuminates it with the light of intellectual truth."[249] Just as with Hallam's vision of "ideal character", in other words, the mode by which poetry views human "realities" is a disciplinary one. It respects not their quotidian existential flux, but the supposed generic shape which determines that flux from within; and it individualises only so far as is necessary to render the crudescence of this generic form within specific circumstances clear.[250]

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[248]ibid., 358, 360-61. By "administrative" I mean the wide notion of what is amenable to government that we saw in chapter two: one which takes in the spread and effects of ideological change in society as well as changes in policing activity.

[249]ibid., 376. See also the remarks on Dunstan, 360-61.

[250]Other discussions of the mode of historic poetry appear in reviews of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* and Macaulay's own preface to that work. Macaulay aims at, and is praised, for re-creating in a Hallam-esque mode the "mood" of a past form of art — the projected Roman popular ballad. This recreation involves the representation of generic historical characters: the identity of past subjects, as projected from historical research. John Wilson, in particular, is exercised by the pleasurable complications of response this throws up in a male reader confronted with a consciousness he recognizes (fatherly pride in a daughter's chastity) and its alien historical consequences (filiacide). These reviews also discuss the projected ballad poetry itself as an instance of a historical poetry, since all adopt Niebuhr's theory that the

Poetry as Practice of the Self

We have now seen a complex disciplinary mechanism being projected in early Victorian avant-garde and conservative criticism. On the one hand, assumptions about the sincerity of good poetry, its dependence on real experience and on a language of symbols which partake of the poet's identity, expose the poet him/herself to a disciplinary gaze. It is not that there is a simple equation between the interiority in a poem and the interiority of the poet. Nonetheless, expressive poetics in this period makes the pattern of the poet's subjectivity an object of individualising, normalising and totalizing interest. On the other hand, assumptions about the generic nature of the interiority poetry expresses, and about the generalised status of the natural and human objects poetic interiority observes, mean that poets wield a disciplinary gaze over interiority and objects in general. As a corollary of avoiding "egotism", poets exhibit an interest in themselves as "specimens".[251] They generalise and simplify subjectivity so that it appears in a poem as a normal state with a simple, or a single, focus. As a corollary of their expressive autonomy from mere "imitation", they "spiritualize" landscape, and reveal the moral patterns which underlie individual and social behaviour. At the same time, poetry exerts power over its defining object, subjectivity itself. It exists to mould subjects in their deep capacity to perceive, interact with and affect their environment, becoming in this respect a

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lost sources for early Roman historiography were poems about the past. These discussions see poetry regarding both personages and events as ripe for individualization and normalization in line with prevailing ideas about admirable behaviour. See Macaulay, *Lays of Ancient Rome*, "Preface"; H. H. Milman, "Lays of Ancient Rome", *Quarterly Review*, 71 (March 1843), 455-56, 458; John Wilson, "Lays of Ancient Rome", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, (December 1842), 806-808, 819-821.

disciplinary surveillance of the subjectivity which is discipline's condition of effect. Finally, we have seen that poetry manifests itself as power and knowledge by constructing discourses which model the complete surveillance of an object on the basis of extremely limited, electrically evocative details about it. Knowledge of the poet arises from the finite repository of poems he/she has published. Knowledge of a state of mind arises from a foreshortened representation of its perceptual correlates — precisely those correlates that have the capability to seed the reader with a vision of them all. Knowledge of the non-human world, finally, is never distributed as a whole, appearing only according to whatever subjectivity is a particular poem's object.

As with historiography, the conditions of these kinds of knowledge and expression mean that poetry both depends on and is the testing ground of the practice of the self of the author. That is, the hermeneutic practice of the author, the means whereby s/he turns perception into the knowledges of poetry, must also be an ethical practice, a way of forming the characteristics of his/her subjectivity. An act of poetic expression is a product not merely of knowledge, but the poet's total formed subjectivity, allowing not only the poet's cognitive but his/her self-disciplining activity to be judged. Poetic knowledge depends on the practice of the self in this way because there is a contradiction between the conditions of the objects it surveys and the epistemological forms it is to convey. Each of the three knowledges which make poetry up are understood as forms of individualising and normalising surveillance. It is the theoretical assumption of the critics we have examined that such a cognitive form corresponds to the essential shape of poetry's epistemological objects themselves. All things are unique; all things possess a

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[251] Aubrey de Vere, "Hartley Coleridge", op. cit., 80-81. Cf. J. D. Shairpe, op. cit., 500-501.

core to their uniqueness which is in touch with the hierarchy of some kind of universal morality. However, the conditions under which the objects of poetry can be known mean that this essence cannot be perceived either directly or with certainty. For example, the knowledge poetry gives of the poet's determining subjectivity is not something the *poet* should directly focus on, and moreover co-exists with the casual, de-centred phenomenological emergence of the poet's quotidian subjectivity. Knowledge of the poet in fact can only emerge if the poet disciplines his/her life so that it expresses a stable, not self-obsessed identity and writes a poetry which re-formulates the emergence of subjectivity so that it appears to have a single external focus in each poem. Knowledge of discrete states of mind, similarly, can only arise from the transmogrification of an experienced or imagined flux of subjectivity. Where the poet's own experience is concerned, elements that are not part of the experienced consciousness itself can be added (Patmore); the order of emergence of this subjectivity can be discounted (Coleridge/Hallam); what was perceived in the moment of consciousness can be changed (de Vere/Mill). Knowledge of the world as the hieroglyphic of human subjectivity and values can also involve suppressing its real elements and re-organising its temporal flow. The way of seeing nature and human interaction which electrically evokes an object in its essential wholeness is not an absolute match with the shape of the object itself. In all these cases, that is, there is an acknowledged breach between the appearance of the object to the poet and its appearance to the subject of poetic knowledge. The poet's job is to manipulate appearances and him/herself so that a poetic knowledge of the object emerges to the poetic subject. Poetry is, in other words, both a commitment to constructing simulacra of its objects and a training of the self to see those simulacra.

The network we have uncovered here — the interweaving of power/knowledge, practice of the self and display of the self — is important to us for three reasons. It means that both historiography and poetry entail the same structural relationships between knowledge and the self. In other words, the epistemological crux of Arthurian discourse is not merely a question of incompatible modes of knowledge but of similar, though competing, modes of social being. It also illuminates the polity represented in *Idylls of the King*. Tennyson's Camelot is based on the display of a "noble" and "fine" rather than "base interpreters[']" view of the self and others. The relationship between discipline and these concerns in historiography and poetry suggests that the poem rehearses not merely particular ideologies but the techniques which keep those ideologies in place. Also, this complex network for the production of subjectivity impinges on the effect upon power relations of *Idylls of the King* as a power-knowledge structure in its own right. A poem exists as a dynamic and imitable representation of a poetic practice of the self. When a reader reads — as we have already noted — s/he becomes the subject as well as the surveyor of poetic discourse and therefore the subject as well as the judge of a poetic practice of the self. It is the evocation of the poetic way of being in the reader — the exceptional emotional, perceptual and rational dispersal in it of relationships between self, other and collective — which gives poetry the power it has over the subjectivity of discipline. *Idylls of the King* must be understood as a perceptual structure in these terms. It is a structure in which the relationship between the subject of the poem and its global epistemological object is part of a machine for extending the poetic construction of subjectivity among readers. Like historiography, poetry is a model for *Idylls* as an epistemologico-ethical form, because it is one of the epistemologies of Arthurian discourse.

As with historiography, the practice of the self which proceeds from a commitment to poetry is defined by three relationships: relationships with the other (or the object of knowledge); with the self (or the subject of knowledge); and with the society which demands a supply of poetic knowledge. Each relationship necessitates some kind of steer being imposed upon the expression of what the poet's self knows spontaneously, and upon the expression of the poet's response to what he/she knows spontaneously. Each also interweaves the development of moral values in the poet and the development of his/her hermeneutic and communicative talent so that these developments together govern the poet's life as a whole. There are substantial differences as well as similarities between the resolutions poetry proposes for these relationships and those proposed by historiography. It is necessary to describe these before proceeding to some conclusions about the epistemological framework Arthurianism provides for *Idylls of the King*.

Let us begin with a point we have already touched on. Poetry, like historiography, requires a commitment to the public: to affecting others, influencing their behaviour. There is — as Keble's and Mill's poetics, along with occasional interest in unpublished poetry, shows — some sense that poetic expression may be a valuable activity even if it never reaches public view.[252] As early Victorian rejection of poetry which does not communicate reminds us, however, the true Poet is a figure with a public reputation and a definite social mission. This mission is achieved by influencing activities which are not part of the communal sphere. Unlike historiography, which aims at political intervention, poetry aims at a management of individual pleasure. More importantly, where the

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[252]Charles Kingsley, "Burns", op. cit., 164; Hartley Coleridge, "Modern English Poetesses", op. cit. 394; "Private Poetry", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, (May 1826), 587-89.

historian's discourse is predicated on the quiet accumulation of positive and testable knowledge, a surveillance of the words of the past, the poet's depends on a managed exposure of the self. As a result, poetry involves a more intricate, contradictory and pressurised relationship between self and society than does historiography. The former discourse, as we have seen, establishes the historian in a pedagogic attitude to society as a whole, and makes the articulation of the historian's unique perspective a condition of discourse but not an objective of it.[253] In poetry, on the other hand, too overtly didactic a tone is a handicap, and the articulation of the poet's standpoint does become an objective as well as a condition of discourse, albeit one surrounded by many anxieties and opportunities. The poet pledges an immediate, deep-seated, sustainable happiness in anyone who reads his/her poems, experienced in the instant the poems are read. As such, the poet faces society with an attitude of delicate and tactful generosity, expressed in what must appear to be both un-suppressible but also un-self-regarding self-expressiveness. Poets evoke happiness by mining their unique and quotidian experience in order to offer others a consciousness of the beauty and seriousness they behold. This means making responses known which are theirs personally, not disguising themselves through a desire to please or through fear that these "most significant portions of [their] lives" will be

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[253] It is not that history is assumed to be completely objective, purged of any specificity which can be traced to its author. As Palgrave reminds us, every historian projects an individual perspective on a common archive, partly intentionally, partly by virtue of new conditions over which s/he has no control (*History of Normandy and England*, op. cit., 94-97). But the historian does not develop this individuality as a reflection of the colour and detail of his own life and personality. It is simply a necessary new emphasis on some hitherto improperly appreciated frame of a common story. The one element of individuality which pertains to this story — the historian's party-political affiliation — has to be suppressed.

ridiculed. Yet it also means exercising control over what is told, keeping hidden what is shameful and what is too private or idiosyncratic to be significant for others.[254] In other words, the relationship between poet and society is at once one of "friendship" and an intimacy which involves continuous tension, with both ready to tell the other what to feel and neither in a position of absolute authority.

If we turn to the relationship between the self and the other (the object of knowledge), two other divergences emerges between the practice of the historiographer and the poet. One concerns the emotional charge residing in the cognitive relation between the writer and the objects of his/her cognition. Both historians and poets are required to exercise "sympathy" with their material. Both are required not to lose the sense of their own identity and their own standards in the practice of this sympathy. Both historiography and poetry, in other words, ultimately hold the other in a power relationship in which the subject rather than the object of knowledge is paramount. History as a discourse, however, determines this movement as an *judicial* act of moral assessment. Depending on public documents, asking ultimately an ethical question about its object, it justifies itself in the even-handed dispensation of stern truths, however it initially participates with the other. Poetry, contrastingly, seeking Beauty, determines this movement as a *joyful* response to the other. Depending on evidence which cannot be

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[254]The poet, for instance, suppresses party politics not because the self is to be excluded from discourse, but because politics, being controversial, are one of the few elements of response which militate against the communication of interiority. Thus religious, as well as political, themes may come under suspicion if they broach controversy: as Taylor acknowledges when he defends de Vere's youthful hymns on neo-Catholic elements of doctrine. "Mr. de Vere's Poems", *Quarterly Review*, 72 (May 1843), 153-4.

gainsaid (the poet's interiority), asking ultimately whether its objects are loveable, it exists as a discourse of "refreshment", of the "happiest aspect", of energy and participation, although it ultimately remains separate from the other.[255] The major other divergence involves the balance that must be struck between the representation of the other and the objectification in the other of the insight of the poet or historiographer. In both cases, the phenomenological singularity of the object must not be lost, but that singularity must also be contextualized in an overall vision which is the author's insight into causes or values. For the historian, however, this objectification only concerns the logical conclusions he has reached. For the poet, the question is more complex, both because the other always objectifies aspects of the poet's total perceptual being and because the poet has more liberty to turn the phenomenological emergence of the object into the phenomenological emergence of its type. In other words, while the poet's response to the other is more "genial" and passionate, it is also less rigourously respectful of the other's specific historic shape. Its greater closeness to the other therefore harbours the potential of a greater violence to it: the constant threat of a solipsism which obliterates poetry in the moment that it ceases to represent the other in its autonomy.

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[255]A. H. Hallam, op. cit., 88; W. J. Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 5; John Wilson, "The Christian Year", op. cit., 833-4; "Clare's Rural Muse", op. cit., 232; "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 122-4; Henry Taylor, "Wordsworth's *Sonnets*", op. cit., 13; Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", 403-4; Coventry Patmore, "Poetry — the Spasmodists", op. cit., 250; see also J. D. Shairpe, op. cit., 504; Sara Coleridge, "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 433; J. Sterling, op. cit., 134; A. Kinnear, "Life of Shelley", *Quarterly Review*, 110 (October 1861), 325.

Considering, finally, the relationship between the poet and his/her own self, a slightly different contrast between the two discourses emerges.[256] A number of poetics in the thirties and forties base poetry firmly in a special conformation of personality. This conformation only creates good poetry, however, in alliance with a further practice of the self, a point developed at some length in the conservative critics of the thirties, forties and fifties. The conformation of personality has been noted by many scholars. It is the assumption that the poet is spontaneously responsive and physically alert, yet also ardent, imaginative and independent of the immediate evidence of the senses.[257] (Associated with this is the suggestion that poetry is a prerogative of the youth of nations or individuals).[258] The corollary of it is a requirement for poets to train their "intellect", to exert "self-control", to cultivate a right "moral" relation to the world.[259] Raw talent

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[256] As Lawrence J. Starzyck has pointed out, poets are assumed to achieve their objects by attaining a perfect balance of their faculties. However, historians are also assumed to attain greatness in the same way.

[257] J. S. Mill, "The Two Kinds of Poet", op. cit., 358; "Tennyson's Poems", op. cit., 413; W. J. Fox, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 211; A. H. Hallam, op. cit., 87; John Wilson, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 102-3, 122-4.

[258] T. B. Macaulay, "Milton", op. cit., 153-6; Sara Coleridge, "Tennyson's *Princess*", 428-29; W. Bagehot, "Idylls of the King", op. cit. 370; Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 405-6.

[259] A. H. Hallam. op. cit., 88-91; J. S. Mill, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 413-4; W. J. Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 4-5; "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 213-4; Henry Taylor, "Preface", *Philip van Artevelde*, op. cit., xi-xiii; Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 379-80; Coventry Patmore, "Poetry — The Spasmodists", op. cit., 243, 245; "New Poets", *Edinburgh Review*, 104 (October 1856), 340; David Masson, op. cit., 323. (Note that the balance for Hallam is within an aesthetic sphere of judgement, not, as in the other theorists mentioned here, between aesthesis, intellect, morality.)

needs to be matched and harnessed to an accumulation of knowledge and convictions won by hard reasoning.[260] The poet's imaginative flexibility must be turned away from self-indulgence.[261] Conservative critics further emphasize a commitment to "common-sense", even a life led in "moral judgement", as further moral practices which control the poet's volcanic capacity.[262] Particularly in long poems, this involves the kind of moral qualities we saw associated with historians: "prudence, enterprise, patience, self reliance .... a magnanimous superiority to petty obstacles", and the retention of the self's rationality in the midst of the passions of others.[263] Just as important, poetry engages the poet in a directed mining of the specific and personal conditions of his life. Personal experience, while it must of be the right, "unselfish" kind, is nonetheless what must be quarried.

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[260] W. J. Fox, "Tennyson's *Poems*", 223-4; J. S. Mill, "Tennyson's *Poems*", 417-8; Henry Taylor, "Preface", op. cit., xiii; David Masson, op. cit., 309-10; John Wilson, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 123-4.

[261] J. S. Mill, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 417; John Wilson, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 123; Henry Taylor, "Preface", op. cit., xi-xii; "Wordsworth's *Sonnets*", op. cit., 11-12; Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 368-70; "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 405; Coventry Patmore, "*In Memoriam*", op. cit., 551.

[262] E.g. Henry Taylor, "Wordsworth's *Sonnets*", op. cit., 13; Coventry Patmore, "Poetry — the Spasmodists", op. cit., 245.

[263] Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", 432, 406. Compare, e.g., Sara Coleridge, op. cit., 432-33; Whitwell Elwin, "Recent Epics", *Quarterly Review*, 90 (March 1852), 333-4 .

developed and used in discourse. A unique manner, reflecting this self, is the corollary of any strong poet.[264]

More subtle is the relation between this practice of the self and the discourse itself in poetry and historiography. Both historians and poets are held to an ideal of the total balance and smooth, harmonious mutual operation of their faculties.[265] However, the two kinds of writer approach it from a different direction. Historians require predominantly the knowledge to be gained in research. Emotional, imaginative and sensible qualities vivify this knowledge, ensuring that it does not remain the flat series of mere facts the antiquarian retails. Poets, conversely, live on sensibility as the substance of their art, and learn to control it as a condition of lasting art. More interestingly, historians carry out this harmonious balancing of their faculties primarily in the acts of research preliminary to discursive expression itself. Imagination and response weighted against rational analysis are the conditions by which the historian comes to understand history. It is this *understanding*, not the technical imagination at work in historiographical writing, which substantially demonstrates the excitation and disciplining of the historian's whole being in the practice of the self through which he produces historical knowledge.[266] Poets, on the other hand, demonstrate and achieve the "keeping" of feeling, sensuousness,

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[264]E.g. John Wilson, "The Christian Year", op. cit., 835-6; Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 378.

[265] Lawrence J. Starzyck, *The Imprisoned Splendour* studies the circulation of this idea in Victorian poetics. He does not, however, examine its importance in historiography.

[266]E.g. Macaulay, "Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., 279-80.

intelligence and spirituality in the act of composition itself. Even though this practice of the self is carried out before and after writing, each moment of a poem, as the revelation of the site of the balance of faculties, is also an element in its whole and complete reproduction.[267] This has two consequences. The actual symbolic practice of the poet cannot be considered merely as a work which derives from prior moral practice. Rather, symbolic self-expression is an integral part of it. Concomitantly, the process — not simply the results — of the self-making by which the poet suppresses and guides the impulses and responses of the body is nakedly displayed in his/her symbolic practice.[268] A little noticed, but recurrent, aspect of early to mid nineteenth century criticism gives a particularly good example of this. Critics identify "finish" — a concept which covers certain matters of verbal and aesthetic technique (structural unity, absence of metrical solecism, banishment of "vulgar" or specialist turns of grammar and lexicon) — not as matters of talent, but moral being. Lack of it is a failure of the work ethic — carelessness or impudence.[269] Just as identity and the individuation of the subject have freer play in poetry than historiography, so more of the self is at risk in it, and so the processes of self-normalisation are closer to the surface of poetic discourse as a public act.

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[267]The production of a long poem also requires it in the preparation for writing. See e.g. Whitwell Elwin, op. cit, 333-4; Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", 432; Sara Coleridge, op. cit., 432.

[268]For discussions of morality in the writing of poems, see A. H. Hallam, op. cit., 88, 91; J. S. Mill, "Tennyson's *Poems*", op. cit., 417; W. J. Fox, "Coleridge and Poetry", op. cit., 5; Henry Taylor, "Preface", *Philip van Artevelde*, op. cit., xiv-xv; Aubrey de Vere, "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", op. cit., 379-80; Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Maud*", op. cit., 245-6.

[269]See G. Moir, op. cit. 174; Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Maud*", 505;

There is one final difference to consider between poetry and historiography as practices of the self in discourse. This concerns their relation to gender identity. There are two major points to consider. First, historiography can be associated with a masculinized social function in Victorian gender ideology. It is tied to intervention in the public sphere of politics. Poetry, in comparison, has been linked both in the nineteenth and late-twentieth century to a feminized social sphere: that of the private realm, the realm of feeling.[270] As a broad discursive practice, in other words, the activity of writing poetry — the practice of the self associated with it — is not incompatible with the construction of the self as female. Second, however, there are some strands in conservative criticism which identify the poet's relation to the specific disciplinary structures I have been discussing as part of the poet's self-construction as male. The important thing here is that this self-construction is not a question of the insertion of activity into a particular sphere of action, as is historiographical masculinity. What is at stake is a particular style of interiority. This comes out in two ways. For Carlyle, the

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[270]See for a nineteenth century take on this attacks on the domestication of poetry by Swinburne, "Notes on Poems and Reviews" (1866), and Alfred Austin, *The Poetry of the Period* (1870), in Joseph Bristow, ed., *The Victorian Poet: Poetics and Persona*, op. cit., 154-66. Elliot Gilbert, Mary Poovey and Carol Christ provide instances of feminist criticism which has examined this association, complicating Gilbert and Gubar's presentation of poetry as a monolithically masculine discourse. See Elliot Gilbert, "Tennyson's Female King" (op. cit.), Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments* (op. cit., 89-125), Carol Christ, "The Female Subject in Victorian Poetry" (op. cit.), S. Gilbert and S. Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1979), Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art*, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature and Culture, 3 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995).

tension between the readership's norms and those perceived and clung to by the poet provides the grounds of a "manly" exercise of expression. The poet is gendered by facing down the pressures which tempt him to compromise the expressed shape of interiority.[271] For de Vere and Taylor, on the other hand, the abandonment of a solipsistic relation between subject and object for a normalising representation of the "heroic" or "strong" character guarantees the masculinity both of the poet's and the reader's psyche.[272] Patmore, meanwhile, sees "the strongest manhood" as the condition of a poetry like "I have led her home" (Maud, Part 1, Section xviii) — where "reflection voluntarily for a time abandons its mental leadership" and the poet "trusts himself ... completely to the direction of his feelings and his instinct of rhythm".[273] In other words, only an interiority in which masculinity is so habitual as to be instinctive can be trusted to remain poetic when it ceases to exert its normalising faculties. In all these cases, the point is not that poetry is gendered as male when it turns from a private to a public sphere. It is a shift of the style of interiority witnessed in discourse. Patmore does not specify its qualities, but in Carlyle, Taylor and de Vere it is a movement from what is timid, or sensuous and exaggerated, to a structure of subjectivity which is calm, long-standing, sharply-edged

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[271]Note that the overt link with masculinity is not made by all critics in this regard. Mill, for instance, links the same thing to not being French ("What is Poetry", op. cit., 349)!

[272]Taylor, "Preface to *Philip van Artevelde*", op. cit., xvi; Aubrey de Vere, "*Edwin the Fair*", *Quarterly Review*, op. cit., 349; "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 408; "Taylor's *Eve of the Conquest*", 368.

[273]Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Maud*", op. cit., 512.

and not fazed by opposition.[274] Gender is thus linked at once to a mastery of the self and to a relation between subjectivity and normalising knowledge. The male poet either composes himself as the enduring object of a hostile disciplinary gaze or as the subject of a gaze under which somebody constitutes themselves as a strongly differentiated type. Masculinization can thus be seen as not merely the implied condition of the writer (as in historiography), but as something created in the act of writing a disciplinary poetry. Poetic maleness, like the self created in poetry, is not dependent on external factors (the necessity, say, for a certain classical education which makes it difficult for a woman or non-elite man to negotiate the protocols of verse), but an exact cognitive practice, occurring in the movements of symbolic expression, which genders the soul.

Let us now turn to the question of the differences of emphases in the poetic practices of the self which occur in the theorists we have examined. In general, each critic supports poetry which sits well with a complex directing of the cognitive and expressive spontaneity of the self. Poetry, in other words, involves an active schooling of the subjectivity of discipline as it appears in particular individuals. Some characteristics of this schooling, which we have covered above, are held in common: the special physical conformation of poets, in which emotional and physical sensitivity is greatly enhanced; the supplement provided that sensitivity by education, patience, perseverance, courage, confidence, the ability not to forget themselves, joy, generosity, honesty. Within that common area, however, there are many emphases, as well as the implicit construction of practices of the self which are thought to produce false poetry. These emphases can in

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[274]See Taylor, "Preface", op. cit., xvi-xvii; de Vere, "*Edwin the Fair*", op. cit., 348-9; Carlyle, "Corn-Law Rhymes", 360-61.

fact be best summarized by the names various critics give to the categories of poet they discern: Hallam's poet of sensation, Mill's poet of nature and poet of culture, Taylor's conservative Wordsworthian poet, Keble's poet of reserve, Keble's and Masson's poet of unrestrainable displaced emotional release, the Byronic poetaster, the contained religious visionary of Patmore and de Vere, and Carlyle's intense, socially visionary hero. Since each is examined specifically in *Idylls of the King*, their exact characteristics will be discussed in the appropriate part of Chapter Four.

Conclusion

One more element needs to be considered before proceeding to a discussion of *Idylls of the King*. This concerns another crucial relation between the epistemological and transactional circuits of historiography and poetry. This is not a question of the particular opposing practices of the self at stake in the two discourses. It is a question of the condition of the epistemological object which would render each practice of the self untenable. That is, if (as in Arthurian discourse) a historiographer, or reader of historiography, is confronted with an object whose status is that of poetry, the historiographer or reader cannot constitute him/herself as the subject of historical knowledge. Conversely, I want to suggest, if the poet, or reader of poetry, is confronted with an object whose condition is that of history, then it is impossible for that reader or poet to constitute themselves as the subject of poetical knowledge. The two discourses, in other words, are not merely different, but directly antagonistic and mutually cancelling. The existence of the conditions for one make the existence of the other impossible. How is this so?

Both these forms of normalised and normalising representation depend on an objectification of the disciplinary gaze in the objects of discourse. In historiography, abstract structures have to be made visible in specific events. There are two conditions of success here. Objectifying the other, history cannot render it visible as an invertebrate form of pure quotidian multiplicity — the mode of the antiquary, where causality can nowhere be seen. Conversely, it must not harden its representation of causality into an exoskeletal carapace for the past — the mode of the dissertation, which leaves the lived fertility of real events cabinned and confined beneath discourse. It has instead to render causality visible in the contours of the other's appearance. It has to project causality as the past's actual interior form. It therefore also has to reveal, on and in the other's appearance, the *other's* depths, not those of the historian's own dazzling light. Philosophical principles, whose ghostly teleology connects the past through the reader to the future, therefore appear compelling only if the represented events which embody them *really happened.* The substance historiography has to reveal requires an expository mimesis of things that can be tagged as factual. Though free to draw on fictional paradigms — comedic and tragic shapes, set-piece military confrontations, galleries of character and high subterfuge — the historian thus cannot create out of thin air.[275] His (always his) discipline has to weave the tapestry of institutional change by weaving discourse and vision through the fragmented and incompleteable loom of documented actors, practices and achievements. The discursive and epistemological threat to a historiography thus conceived is to do all this, yet still make visible the triumph of values in a representation

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[275]See, e.g., Macaulay on the historian's need for "a lower [i.e. not "poetical"] kind of imagination", "Sir James Mackintosh", op. cit., 279-80.

which negates that triumph because it unwittingly screens out the other's real condition. Put another way, the besetting danger of historiography is, without knowing it, to become a poetry masquerading as history. It is to represent the past as a normalised entity, but in fact to have been bamboozled by what remains visible, so that the discourse does not represent "what really happened", only a tissue of events that objectifies the historian's subjectivity.

For poetry, the situation is curiously inverted. Poetry can reveal consciousness in two ways — in a structurally lyric outpouring which gives onto the poet's mind, or in a dramatised exploration of a mind not the poet's own. In either case, it faces the same imperative. It must render a consciousness in which the steps of cognition merge with the dance of norms. But it cannot convincingly do this without consciousness being related to some actuality. The represented consciousness must be a solid one, a based one, even if it is not the poet's. The poet's representations thus also have to be divided from two other kinds of objectification. They cannot be a mere reproduction of undifferentiated perceptions of an object. They also cannot completely hide the other beneath the throw-over of value-charged subjectivity. The problem negotiated by this division is the diametric opposite to that of history. Poetry has to render normal the shape of the *consciousness* it made visible to the reader, not the shape of the reality this consciousness sees. It has to bring to the surface of cognition the inner form which governs cognition itself — either by rendering a dramatised consciousness in the form of its type, or a lyricized one at moments of undiluted value. As such, it can cut, re-jig, epitomise, even add to, the appearance of the realities its revealed consciousness sees, so long as it retains a sense of their essence — a sense of the inner form which fuses them into their own individuality. But this is permissible only so long as it makes sure that represented

consciousness then equates with an undeviating, unhesitating, unrepeating objectification of value. It is disqualified if the consciousness which is thus objectified turns out to be confused, disreputable or nugatory. The danger to a poetry thus conceived is to objectify a consciousness which *is* normalised — or ready to be so — in a re-created reality which does not quite permit this objectification. This is not merely a possibility of solipsism. It may also arise in a mind surveying an object, charged with a sense of a value within the object which reflects its own, but unable to actualise this sense because the object is too incompletely known to substantiate that sense. This means that the epistemological threat to poetry is in fact the condition of history. It is an experience in which the mind must relinquish its own organic objectification to remain true to what can properly be said about the norm within the other.

Within each such organisation of the representation of discipline is also a principle which threatens to undermine the allegiance each owes to disciplinary form. Historiography, as we saw, has as its nightmare that its objectification not be an objectification of the other's interiority in the other's surface, but an (unwilling) projection of the self. Such a condition, however, is what historiography depends upon for its very access to the level of causality which it posits as the interiority of history. Recall that history's interiority is a substratum of causation which reflects philosophical conclusions about ethics. That substratum has as its founding element the reciprocal originary force of individual human subjectivity and the institutions that condition and train that subjectivity. Nations thus rise and fall as a series of experiments in deep politics. (The

experiment is the unique system of interlocking institutions each develops.)[276] The historian gains insight into these experiments by extrapolating down from the surface of events and subjectivities to the interiority of their motive interaction. He gains access to this surface, however, in an extrapolation upwards and outwards from the fragments of it which remain visible: its words. This, in a double sense, bases history upon its own epistemological negation. It is not merely that the hermeneutic act in which the historian empathises with the past's words is strictly an imaginative and fictional one. More pertinently, it is that the words from which this empathy springs must be understood to have the condition of self-projective fictions. The historian cannot take the remains of the past at face-value, merely reading them as transparent reproductions of the past's surface of events and people. This is because each fragment, as well as witnessing those events and people, is itself articulated by the skein of causality which history expresses as a whole. Each is one instance of the way one nation's institutions moulded subjectivity. Each, as such, must be seen as expressing some particular subjective position within that skein — some place distributed out along its length and breadth. This means that the knowledge of the paste instantiated in each of the documents which remain of it is a

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[276]Thus, for Thomas Arnold, the overwhelming value of Classical history. It records the actions of statesmen whose "political experience" exceeds any subsequent, because it is derived from observation of "153 commonwealths", which together exhibited "the institutions of various races derived from various sources: every possible variety of external position, of national character, of positive law; agricultural states and commercial, military powers and maritime, wealthy countries and poor ones, monarchies, aristocracies and democracies, with every imaginable form and combination of each and all; states overpeopled and underpeopled, old and new, in every circumstance of advance, maturity and decline" (*The History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides* (Oxford and London, 1842), xxii).

knowledge which expresses that subjective position. As such, what it represents the past to be is a disguise of the past's real condition, because no-one surveys their own time completely. But this misrepresentation also objectifies its gaze's actual formation by the principles which determine that past. As such, history not merely bases itself on a form of poetry — an oft-observed truism — but bases itself on the reversal of the very disciplinary objectification it seeks to satisfy. In its founding moment as a knowledge of the past it faces a proliferation of representations all formed by what it itself seeks, but all of which therefore occlude the real condition of the past as it itself knows it must be. This has one further consequence. Positing each individual source as a kind of fiction, which hides as well as reveals the surface of events and the totality of moral causes which constitutes the past, the historian posits his own bypassing of what is actually visible of the past. To re-constitute a disciplinary knowledge of the past as a whole, he must delve below and out from what remains of it. Far from being based in a moment of knowledge which renders the past wholly visible in its representation, history initiates itself by positing (a) that the past becomes visible only in a form which overrides what actually remains discernible of the past and (b) that causes are not manifest in what remains discernible of the past. Not only does it face a proliferation of deceptive objectifications of discipline, it must found itself as one.

Poetry, on the other hand, as an investigation of consciousness, is discipline's extension into the interiority which it posits in general as the condition of its efficacy as power. At the same time, as an investigation of consciousness which is always a-knowing, it is discipline's investigation of the very activity which makes surveillance possible. Two things complicate matters here. On the one hand, poetry is a disciplinary knowledge of the myriad forms which make the gaze "humid". It normalises a gaze

which is discipline's opponent: a gaze which emotes, projects, responds, not one which looks, measures, notes. The forms it manifests in its objects' visibility continually betray the objects' distance from or approach to discipline. On the other hand, as above, the epistemological structure of access to this interiority involves a condition which cannot be expressed except through a cavalier disregard of the protocols of a disciplinary gaze. Poetry weaves itself through a matter which is either constantly and totally available or entirely inaccessible — the poet's mind, or the phenomenological emergence of a perception which is not the poet's own. To express any knowledge at all of such a matter entails an activity of epitome and invention such as we saw permitted the poet with the objects of the consciousness it wishes to make known. It is not merely that the poet may re-creatively mould the appearance of the other to objectify the value of a consciousness. S/he must also carry out such a practice amongst the very matter poetic surveillance seeks to make known. Consciousness is multiple and asymmetric in its dealings with value. To present for the reader's cognition a purified or typical moment of consciousness (one which renders it for a disciplinary knowledge) necessarily involves cobbling together a simulation comprised of cut and re-cut moments of what surveillance has actually witnessed.[277] Alternatively, it is a mere mirage of a region which cannot be known. If history has moments of epitome and extrapolation they may by justified as a movement between fragments of visibility — as sensitivity to what is in fact but partially known.

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[277]Thus Wilson, caustically, of Tennyson: "he is self-willed and perverse in his sometimes almost infantile vanity; and ... thinks that any Thought or Feeling or Fancy that has had the honour and the happiness to pass through *his* mind, must by that very act be worthy of commemoration. Heaven pity the poor world, were we to put into stanzas, and publish upon it, all out thoughts, thick as mots in the sun, or a summer evening atmosphere of midges!" (Wilson, "Tennyson's Poems", op. cit., 123).

Poetry has no such outlet. Its drive to express an individualising and normalising knowledge of consciousness unavoidably contradicts the disciplinary imperative that the object's interiority be manifest in the precise visibility it actually has to surveillance. Moreover, this drive thus equates discipline with the condition of what it surveys: a gaze which responds and intervenes in its perception of the object, not one which calibrates and measures it. The consequence of that, finally, is to render all poetry structurally similar to the very condition I set out above as its epistemological negation. It is a consciousness itself possessing the attributes of an individualised and normalised shape. It is suspended before an other within which it perceives an objectification of such value. But the precise surface it perceives does not compute as an individualised and normalised form.

The response of each discourse to Arthurianism plays out these epistemological structures. The corpus waved before historiography its negation. It made accessible what history sought to grasp — but through lenses which peopled the past with the colours, distortions, mirages, blind-spots and blurrings of a slovenly and self-dramatising imagination. It opened a world either so thin and meagre that surveillance slid off it (the 'real' Arthur), or one where everything that could represent the unfolding of historical principles was bleary with doubtful facticity (the chivalric 'Arthur'). Arthurian history thus presented surveillance with the spectre not merely of its negation but its objectification as madness. It embodied history's gaze as a paronoid, delusional matrix of total control. It did make the other manifest as a thing whose every twitch betrayed an inner historical productivity. But it made this manifestation either the hypertrophied dream of the subject (historiography's relation to the 'chivalric' Arthur), or an imperative leaving the object neither mystery, play, liberty or repose (historiography's relation to the 'real' Arthur).

This same epistemology could, however, be seen as a boon for poetry. As we have seen, critics of the *Idylls* of 1859 were relatively enthusiastic about the Arthurian theme; and we are now in a position to see why this might be so. Tennyson's early Arthurian poems, as Simpson has shown, were not in line with the practice of Arthurian fiction, falling outside the generic patterns the readership were attuned to. "Morte D'Arthur" also fell foul in the early 1840s of those elements in criticism which were still concerned to dispel both Utilitarian critique and Romantic practice of a poetry without adequate realism or direct social content. The 1859 critics, however, squarely defended the mixed epistemological mode of Arthurianism in the terms provided by conservative poetics. It was either the representation of a typical world of character and virtue, organised around the great spiritual principle of the superiority of Right over Might, or an idealised world reaching out to the readership's primary and "usual" interest in (morally justified) sex and violence. Both the approval of this virtual reality, and the reservations about its particular characteristics which derived from its medieval version of ideals, fit firmly in the ideas of poetry as a disciplinary structure that we have been propounding. On the one hand, as an ideal world with some basis in historical reality, it already presented a normalised "Nature and human life". Indeed, it presented an individualised, normalised and totally surveyed one. As a whole it focused on one great kingdom founded on one great principle (the Christian King); as a series of tales it focused on a very few underlying kinds of activity and feeling. At the same time, it purported to sum up the whole culture of the middle ages; and could be seen as based on a thorough review of that culture, which deliberately retained only what was normal in it. As such, it formed one of the kinds of foil these critics theorised for the expression of normalised consciousness. It is one of the "regions of beauty and delight", "more exalted and pure

than .. can ever [be] ... on earth ... into which spirits whom this world has wearied may retire": a place, in other words, which exists as a screen for the poet's interiority.[278]

This means that Arthurian story presents the surveillance of the mind with two very welcome things. It gives this surveillance a reality which has already been re-created so as to objectify an individualised and normalised moment of consciousness. It thereby also presents surveillance with a consciousness already re-organising its inner movement into individualised and normalised morsels. Presented with such an object, not only does poetic surveillance's activity with objects in nature no longer contradict the protocols of discipline, its activity with consciousness itself does not. The Victorian poet merely needs to repeat and re-emphasize the practice which the consciousness it observes is carrying out. Whether considering that consciousness as actually medieval, or merely as the consciousness which is traversed when one reads the objectification of a medieval mind, his/her gaze suffers no tension between what it sees and what it wants to do. It can objectify itself without hesitation in Arthurian story. This is not seriously affected by the fact that Arthurian writing is a bygone version of a disciplined world, with the result that both its canons of discipline and the thoroughness of discipline's application are suspect. Arthurian story is full of elements of reality now found below the threshold of art, showing a world of barely re-constructed violence, sexuality and treachery. Also, it does not properly individualise either the consciousness it expresses or the world it surveys. The romances are a jumble of contradictions *en masse* and, individually, full of repetition and exaggeration. However, because the consciousness objectified in them is already one

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[278]Aubrey de Vere, "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 409-10. Compare, as well as Bagehot and the *London Quarterly*, the *Times* (September 10th, 1859) and the *Constitutional Press*, 1 (September 1859), 401-2.

which attempts discipline, the re-organisation the Victorian poet must carry out (to the stories and thus to the consciousness they embody) is no longer a movement which violates the object's visible shape. It is merely one which accentuates that shape, throwing into sharper relief what is already visible. As such, what Tennyson is seen to have done with these legends — pulling them into far tighter epic coherence than they possessed before, revising the morality they represent without ditching their idiosyncrasy — is seen correspond with a disciplinary poetics. He gives the tales a tighter individualising focus and a more strict normalising line.

This critical appreciation provides us with a springboard for our final chapter. *Idylls of the King* clearly takes on board the problem of a disciplinary poetics. What is not so clear, as we shall see, is the ingenuousness of the poem's use of Arthurianism. As we saw in chapter one, literary critics hurried over the problem of Arthur as a sixth century king, in order to unfold the disciplinary status of medieval romance. Tennyson, while retaining many medieval elements, does not ignore the historiographical Arthur. As a result, his analysis of poetic discipline — indeed of discipline as a mode of policing throughout society — is a good deal less sanguine than these critics allowed.

CHAPTER FOUR

UN-DISCIPLINING CAMELOT

In the last three chapters, we have sketched a complex intellectual context for Tennyson's longest, most ambitious poem. We have seen how Arthurian narrative opened up the question of a dual epistemology, pitting the values of historiography against the values of poetry, and within each discourse pitting fact, self-restraint and integrity against imagination, fervour and idealism. We have seen, more precisely, that this dual epistemology opened on two distinct, but closely related frameworks of discussion about knowledge, power, discourse and the self. Theories of historiography and poetry proposed objects, objectives, and cognitive and manipulative modes which echoed and extended those of disciplinary knowledge. In each discourse multiple networks of surveillance meant that, as well as the object of knowledge being subject to normalising power, the being of the author of that knowledge as a knowing, expressing, imagining and feeling source of praxis was also open to normalisation. However, the protocols, norms, implicit metaphysical focus and conformation of the practice of the self suggested for each discourse were not identical. These differences motivated the competing assessments of

Arthurian story that we saw in historiographical and literary critical discourse.

What we have now to do is examine how *Idylls of the King* fits into this context. There are two governing aspects to explore. On the one hand, as a *representation* of social change and its relation to personal identity, *Idylls of the King* subjects disciplinary systems of power-knowledge to intense scrutiny. Fired by Tennyson's deep ambivalence concerning the new forces of surveillance and social expression constituted by the mass-media and mass market, the poem envisages Camelot on the lines of the disciplinary institution. It is not merely that the Round Table brings crimes and abuses of power into the harsh light of state retribution, but that its own internal structure comprises a series of loosely interlocked, spatially diffuse mechanisms of observation. The poem questions the long term coherence of such mechanisms from the point of view of an administrative and existential critique: taking as its text not the procedural and managerial minutiae of detection, but the imbricated psychological, epistemological and ethical pressures surveillance sustains in the subject. using the models of poetic and historiographical practices of the self, it suggests that the processes of observation moralise subjects only exceptionally, belatedly, hypocritically or supinely. Rather than stabilising value, surveillance merely provides an intensifying medium for conflict: either as its own stresses prompt quite incompatible readings of normalisation, or as its structures absorb and recycle pre-existing but divergent visions of the norm. At the same time, as a *representative example* of historical and poetic discourse, *Idylls* highlights the disciplinary relations central to both — the individualising and normalising gaze which structures the

subject of discourse and its cognitive object. Once again, the text suggests that the mode of surveillance is a powerful but ultimately self-defeating tool. Exploiting the condition of Arthurian story as a fantasy world whose elements are nonetheless historical, Tennyson proffers and disrupts a series of apparently normalised and individualised visions of his discourse's epistemological object. Historiographical visions of the Arthurian corpus are displaced by aesthetic ones and vice versa, with the poem finally adhering to a structure of suspension before possible normalisations. In both ways, Tennyson works the dual epistemology of Arthurian matter to deconstruct the specific socio-existential practices and underlying technologies of power-knowledge which that matter evokes in the context of the nineteenth century.

It is of course no critical innovation to claim that Tennyson's poetry is deeply concerned with the modes of knowledge of history and poetry, in all their social, psychological, moral and philosophical implications. Henry Kozicki's excellent study of the place of speculative historiographical grand-narratives in the œuvre as a whole is essential reading for any Tennyson scholar.[1] The struggle of the poems of the early thirties with issues of aesthesis and social commitment has also provided a perennial field for critical disquisition, while readings of *The Princess, In Memoriam* and *Maud* return consistently to their disposal of social critique through the problems of genre, language and poetics. Such an analysis also touches on topics long acknowledged as specifically important to *Idylls*. Questions of epistemology, hermeneutics, art and

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[1]Henry Kozicki, *Tennyson and Clio* (Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

history have been understood from the beginning as central to the poem. Its specific relation to bourgeois and imperial forms of identity in the second half of the nineteenth century has also been a consistent bone of critical contention. For our purposes, three lines of approach to the poem require acknowledgement. Academic criticism in the nineteen-sixties, seventies and early eighties developed a view of the work as a whole in terms of Modernist symbol, whose ultimate interest was the existential bases of identity, the clash of "time" and "aspiration".[2] The most comprehensive of these works, William E. Buckler's *Man and his Myths*, adds to this reading a sense of the poem as a hermeneutic and cultural *tour de force*. It transcends its Victorian origins not only by virtue of its existential theme, but via a self-conscious relation to the institution of literature as a repository of objects adequate for the deepest, most psychically demanding and fruitful interpretative practices.[3] Since the early eighties, with the refinement of techniques of historicist and political criticism,

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[2]John D. Rosenburg, *The Fall of Camelot: A Study of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King"* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1973). See also J. P. Eggers, *King Arthur's Laureate: A Study of Tennyson's "Idylls"* (New York, New York University Press, 1971); J. M. Gray, *Thro' the Vision of the Night: A Study of Source, Evolution and Structure in Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King'"* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1980); Clyde Ryals, *From the Great Deep: Essays on* Idylls of the King (Ohio University Press, 1967). Kerry McSweeney, *Tennyson and Swinburne as Romantic Naturalists* (Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press, 1981), rejects the first published *Idylls* as inadequate instances of symbolic form.

[3]William E. Buckler, *Man and His Myths: Tennyson's Idylls of the King in Critical Context* (New York, New York University Press, 1984).

the poem has been pursued in another direction: as a far from complacent though explicitly conservative examination of its Victorian origins. Feminist and new historicist critics have explored its equivocal plays upon hegemonic analyses of gender, empire and forms of knowledge. In particular, recent work has illuminated its relation to orientalist epistemology, the technologies of publicity, gender oriented fears of the dissolution of history, and the possibly gendered basis of knowledge.[4] Herbert Tucker, meanwhile, has continued the analysis of œuvre and ideological work he began in *Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism*, considering epistemology, epic and novel in *Idylls*.[5] A smaller, but no less important group of approach to the poem,

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[4]Elliot L. Gilbert's "The Female King: Tennyson's Arthurian Apocalypse", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 98, 5 (October, 1983), 863-79) may be said to have inaugurated this phase. Feminist critiques include Marion Shaw, *Alfred Lord Tennyson*, Feminist Readings (London, Harvester, 1988); "Tennyson's Dark Continent", *Victorian Poetry*, 32 (Summer 1994), 157-69; Rebecca Umland, "The Snake in the Woodpile: Tennyson's Vivien as Victorian Prostitute", in Martin Shichtman, J. Carley and M. Day, eds., *Culture and the King: Social Implications of the Arthurian Legend* (1994); Lynne O'Brien, "Male Heroism: Tennyson's Divided View", *Victorian Poetry*, 32 (Summer 1994), 171-82. For readings in the context of imperialism see Linda Hughes, "Victors and Victims: Tennyson's Enid as Postcolonial Text", *Victorian Poetry*, 31 (Winter 1993); Ian McGuire's, "Epistemology and Empire in *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30, 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 387-400; Victor Kiernan, "Tennyson, King Arthur and Imperialism", in *Culture, Ideology and Politics: Essays for Eric Hobsbawm*, eds. Samuel Raphael and Gareth Stedman Jones (London, 1982).

[5]Tucker, Herbert F., "The Epic Plight of Troth in *Idylls of the King*", *English Literary History*, 58 (1991), 701-20; "Trials of Fiction: Novel and Epic in the Geraint and Enid Episodes from *Idylls of the*

finally, has explored its anomalous narrative structure — its status as a serial poem, and as a poem with a multi-layered narrative context.[6] What no-one has yet done, however, is to examine the poem's interest specifically in discipline as a mode of power and knowledge linked at once to the constitution of individual identity, representation and social stability. It is this interest that the following pages set out.

I shall be confining myself to the four poems published in 1859. This is not simply a matter of space. The salient aspects of *Idylls of the King* as an examination of discipline do not change from the first group of the poems. Indeed, they are already the centrepiece of the very first idyll to be written within the generic and narrative framework Tennyson finally settled on for his Arthurian poem.[7] What does change, however, is the context of poetic discipline I examined in the previous

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King", *Victorian Poetry*, 30, 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 441-61; *Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1988).

[6]Kathleen Tillotson's "Tennyson's Serial Poem", in *Mid Victorian Studies*, ed. Kathleen and Geoffrey Tillotson (London, 1965); and F. E. L. Priestley's study of the poem's multiple narrative structure are the important texts here (in *Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry* [London, Andre Deutsch, 1973]).

[7]"Vivien" was begun in 1854, and broken off for the composition of *Maud*. Though "Morte d'Arthur" was written many years before this, and was taken by the first reviews as the fifth poem in a fragmentary epic, it is conceived in a different genre and different handling of narrative than the one Tennyson finally alighted on (the "eleventh book" of a Homeric "epic", not the twelfth book of a unified series of adapted Theocritean idylls).

chapter. As I noted in chapter 3, in the 1860s, the line of conservative poetics for which disciplinary epistemology is important loses some ground. [8] While Walter Bagehot's classification of styles according to the way they show the Type, continues this vein,[9] cutting-edge criticism of the decade (the increasingly influential Matthew Arnold, the new work of Walter Pater, Algernon Swinburne and Alfred Austin) introduces notions of aesthesis which challenge it. Swinburne and Austin object specifically to a normalisation of poetic expression in terms of the protocols of polite society — for them a historically anomalous domestication or feminisation of poetry.[10] Arnold, meanwhile, continues to elaborate a view of poetry which rejects the expressive theories which ground it as a discipline of interiority. Poetry is morality in itself, via style, and though it is adequate to a particular kind of mental balance, [11]

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[8]The following paragraph represents the possible lines a new research project might follow rather than settled conclusions or analysis of any of the writers mentioned. A number of scholars have suggested a shift of emphasis within criticism around the sixties and seventies. (See eg. David Shaw, *The Lucid Veil*, op. cit., 120 et passim, which examines the rise of "purist" models of art at this time; Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Scrutinies,* op. cit., 50 59, which suggests a shift from critical interest in what is aspirational to what is unusual in the same decade.)

[9]Walter Bagehot, "Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning; or, Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry", *National Review* (November 1864), n.s., i, 27-66.

[10]See the passages reprinted in Joseph Bristow, ed., *The Victorian Poet: Poetics and Persona*, World and Word Series, (London and Sydney, Croom Helm, 1987),154-66.

[11]Matthew Arnold, "On the Modern Element in Literature", in Matthew Arnold, *Selected Prose*, ed. P. J. Keating (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1982), 58-60.

expresses neither the poet's nor anyone else's peculiar state of subjectivity. It focuses wholly on the object and what is rhetorically effective as a presentation of that object.[12] Moreover, Arnold shifts understanding of poetry as an element in social control from the idea of the unmediated leavening effect of a mass marketed discourse towards that of the state-directed leavening effect produced by the correct appreciation and criticism of classic poetry. This culminates, in a similar move to the development of historiography in the seventies, in the attempt to place poetry in the national curriculum.[13] Poetry as social control, in other words, moves from being a special rhetorical power which works by pleasure, to being a special discourse of moral style whose epistemological specificity can only be adequately disseminated if it is formally taught. Pater, meanwhile, launches a serious epistemological onslaught on the cognitive bases of a disciplinary poetry. "Style" and "The School of Giorgione" inform us that poetry is the total union of form and content in discourse, and the encapsulation, so far as discourse permits, of the specific quality of each moment of subjective impression of things.[14] In one respect, Pater thus strengthens the individualising moment of the gaze poetry turns on interiority. Pater's relativism,

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[12]Matthew Arnold, "Preface" to *Poems* (1853), in Keating, op. cit. 47-52.

[13]See Chris Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism, 1848-1932*, rev. ed. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), 19-85 for a discussion of Arnold's seminal position in the development of literary appreciation as an element in schooling and social control.

[14]Walter Pater, "The School of Giorgione", in *Essays on Literature and Art* ed. Jennifer Uglow (London, Dent, 1973), 50-53; "Style", in Uglow, op. cit., 72.

however, requires that these moments of subjectivity are no longer normalised — no longer attached to any hierarchy of value. Moreover, concentrating wholly on the "impression", he abandons the notion that aesthetic knowledge of the other involves qualities which are supposed to belong to it. One no longer sees the object "as in itself it really is"; one seeks "to know one's own impression as it really is": and this impression varies wholly according to the temperament of the observer. [15] There is thus neither normalisation nor individualisation of the object within perception. [16] Tennyson responds to such ideas in the second and subsequent instalment of *Idylls*, in the epistemological complications of "The Coming of Arthur", "The Holy Grail" and "The Last Tournament". What is at stake in these poems, however, is the incorporation of new notions of the relation between subject and object in a framework already established in the first group of poems. It is also, however, a

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[15]Walter Pater, "Preface" to *The Renaissance* (1873), in *Essays on Literature and Art* ed. Jennifer Uglow (London, Dent, 1973), 90.

[16]There is normalisation in a superficially similar way to David Masson, in that for Pater the object itself may be one of central human importance, and impressions about such objects make for "great art", rather than merely "good art" ("Style", op. cit., 88-9). This is not a discipline that emerges inside the gaze which poetry turns upon objects, however, but an external critical assessment of the poet's gaze itself. Masson, unlike Pater, makes the decision to create art out of impressions of humanly exiguous or central subject-matter derive from a principle within the poetic gaze: it is a matter of the quality of interiority which is compelled to express itself. The poet's gaze normalises the object, because it does not merely involve a response to the object (as in Pater) but the measurement of the object in terms of its capacity to evoke emotional intensities which demand the relief of expression.

generalisation of focus, such that questions of knowledge and interpretation, common both to the first and second group of idylls are no longer so specifically connected to the discourse of poetry and historiography, as they are in the first group.[17] For our purposes, in this respect, it is more important to concentrate on the first group than any of the subsequent poems.

Camelot: Disciplinary Society

I noted at the beginning of the chapter that *Idylls of the King* broaches the questions of surveillance, history and poetry in two ways — in terms of its representation of a society and individuals, and in terms of its status as an instance of Arthurian discourse. I propose now to examine each of these perspectives in turn, beginning with the poem's represented world. In Tennyson's Arthurian Britain, there

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[17]This is not to say that such links do not exist. Merlin's assimilation of Camelot to "music", as a symbolic structure which is always a-building, does not merely recall Carlyle's notion of music as an image of eternal structure. Merlin's remarks come as he observes interference between the perceptions of the individual and the reality of the object. This recalls Pater. For the latter, the assimilation of art to music is a metaphor for the assimilation of what pertains to "intelligence" and "perception" in art: the integration of effects which derive from the object which the art-work deals with and effects which derive from the additional, temporary element of "vision within" which unifies the object for the purposes of art.

are two slightly divergent locuses of discipline and discourse, corresponding respectively to a historiographical and a poetic view of the main thrust of the representation. On the one hand, discipline is an aspect of the ethics and broad institutional forms Arthur injects into the nation state he inherits. Discipline and its techniques are echoed in the tools he chooses to re-establish the rule of law, to gain acquiescence for his polity among the populace at large, and to instil his companions with correct ideals, feelings and practices. They are his contribution as a statesman of the kind projected by Victorian historiography: the means through which he will stabilise and strengthen the collective, creating an institutional system which trains and moralises every individual subject. However, the structure of individual practice which arises from Arthur's polity means that morality, the relation to the self, is always guaranteed in cognitive and expressive practice. Arthur's achievement therefore centres on the same personal problematic as that of the historian or the poet, and must be explored by examining Camelot's production of the object of poetry. *Idylls* therefore presents the trials and tribulations of particular knights and ladies as its narrative substance, carrying out an investigation of specific, individualised and normalised conformations of the subjectivity of discipline through the models provided by some of the varieties of historiographical and poetic self.

We may begin with the most general of Arthur's goals and the means he adopts to achieve them. Echoing Hallam *père* and Sharon Turner on the world-historical achievement of medieval kings, Arthur's founding anxiety is to revive and extend the "law" as a unified and enforceable jurisdictional entity. He sees as his challenge

"ways ... filled with rapine": "bandit earls, and caitiff knights,/Assassins, and all flyers from the hand/Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law".[18] The Round Table is established, correspondingly, to extirpate crime (MV, 408-9), institutionalising and centralising a previously ad hoc vigilante activity in which "knighthood errant" "redressed ... wrong" (G, 455-6). [19] This process is understood in two ways, one metaphorical, one a question of institutional structure. It is a symbolic gardening of the Kingdom,[20] — but it is also an extension and de-obfuscation of the knowledge which the state has of its subjects. "I let foul wrong stagnate and be,/By having looked too much through alien eyes", admits Arthur to Geraint (GE, 890-1). He

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[18]"Guinevere", l. 454-5. Subsequent line references will be in the text. With the text I refer to the four poems by their 1859 titles ("Enid", "Vivien", "Elaine", "Guinevere"). For ease of reference, however, line references are to the poems in Ricks's edition, which gives the poems in their final form. I have therefore adopted the following abbreviations for references: "Enid — MG of GE (according to the subsequent division of the poem into "The Marriage of Geraint" and "Geraint and Enid"); "Vivien" — MV ("Merlin and Vivien"); "Elaine" — LE ("Lancelot and Elaine"); "Guinevere" — G. I have stuck to the 1859 text, which can be found in Ricks's excellent footnotes. (The only substantial difference is the absence of ll 6-146 of the final text of "Merlin and Vivien". This does have the effect of implying a rather different character for Vivien — teenage vamp rather than Cornish Mata Hari.)

[19]Rather than being sops for an otherwise idle agglomeration of fissiparous and frustratedly warlike manhood, the tournament and the quest are thus envisaged as at once training, casework and demonstration of a form of armed police. (Margaret Linley, op. cit., 369 suggests that both these forms are empty diversions from the martial basis of the Round Table.)

[20]This symbol is examined at length in J. P. Eggers, "The Weeding of the Garden: Tennyson's Geraint Idylls and the Mabinogion", *Victorian Poetry*, 4, (1966), 45 - 51.

examines his deputies by "cast[ing] his eyes" on them, with the resultant displacement of "bandit holds" and "the slothful officer/or guilty" meaning he has "Cleared the dark places" (930-43). In other words, Arthur understands crime as something which flourishes not simply where the arm of the law does not extend but as something which flourishes where — because the King's delegated gaze is handled by a lazy or corrupt official — the *eye* of the law cannot *see*. His ideal is a system in which knowledge of crime being stamped out flows unimpeded and undistorted from every point in the kingdom to its judicial centre: a system, that is, in which the object of power and the object of knowledge are identical. Insofar as this drive for the visibility of the kingdom extends to the Round Table, it even motivates what would otherwise seem merely chivalric fetish: Guinevere's interest in Edyrn's name, for instance, and Geraint's determination that the symbol of Edyrn's submission is the confession not only of that name, but its retailing to the court along with knowledge of his "lair", his misdemeanour and his humbling.

Arthur's interest in mechanisms which repeat those of surveillance is played out in greatest detail in what, in line with Victorian metahistory, we might call the 'higher' ethical purposes of his statecraft. Echoing Victorian analysis of the inextricable reciprocity of monarchic jurisdiction-building and the development of new practices of the self in the middle-ages, Arthur envisages the goal of lawfulness not merely as an institutional or statutory question, but as a complete way of being to be inculcated in every individual. The Round Table knight is more praised when he "pluck[s]" crime "wholly out" of his inner self than when he chases it up in others,

however spectacularly (GE, 895-918). His vow is to learn "high thought, and amiable words/And courtliness, and the desire of fame,/And love of truth" (G, 477-80), until "his very face with change of heart is changed"(GE, 918). As before, Arthur seeks success in this endeavour by creating a network in which power will operate by making its objects visible. In this case, he aims to create within the subjectivity of each knight a mensurative gaze which incorporates the wider norms of behaviour which are the condition of maintaining the law. This is to be achieved by a triangulation of three relationships in which the knight is committed to abide by the judgement of an external eye. All of these relationships are established in the knights' vows. First, each knight is bound "To reverence the King, as if he were/Their conscience, and their conscience as their King". Adding himself to the subject's own interior monitor — to a monologue which constructs the subject as a moral individual — an appraising gaze which is Arthur's proxy can thus cover not only all of geographic but all of psychological space.[21] Second, the vows attempt to regulate two rather more volatile relationships in which human individuals are seen to act submissively merely because they know they are visible to judgement. The primary force in "plant[ing]" law in the subject for Arthur is not the marrying of conscience and the King's gaze, but the protracted assessment carried out by the virgin who is a knight's intended. The man's "passion" to satisfy the "maiden"'s judgement is the most "subtle master under heaven" for schooling his gesture, speech, desire and

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[21]The metaphor for the psychological effect of Arthur's battle-cry in "The Coming of Arthur" strikingly echoes this: it makes the nocturnal sinner feel caught in the act ("The Coming of Arthur", 145-8).

thought, leading him to internalise and generalise the norms upon whose basis the woman will consent to be "won" (G, 474-80). Reinforcing this is the surveillance of each knight by his peers within the institutions of the Court and Round Table themselves. Throughout the poem, an unofficial network of casual, low-grade eavesdropping "buzz[es] ... abroad" the minutest actions of knights and ladies (LE, 717). A moment's flirtation (MV, 153-62), a drunken walk (MV, 745-65), the "vibrat[ion] on the walls" of "the shadow of some piece of pointed lace" all become grist to the mill of a scandalising culture reaching into the boudoir and further (LE, 1167-8). While Merlin, Guinevere and Lancelot elide this gossip with the wider "buzz" of talk in the despised "crowd" (the populace at large) Arthur appears to see it merely as the epistemological and expressive misuse of an otherwise neutral mechanism. Accordingly, he swears the knights "To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it" (G, 469) — an injunction specifically to silence transgressive stories a knight sees no evidence for.[22] The Round Table, in other words, is envisaged not so much as an oasis of forbearance amid the glare of "rumour" and "disfame" but as an oasis of managed and democratized surveillance. It is a space in which actions are visible, and in which value judgements circulate constantly but unvindictively in the court's "noble

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[22]James Eli Adams rightly draws attention to the confusion of "slander" and "scandal" in certain aspects of *Idylls* as well as in mid-Victorian responses to the power of the fourth estate. It should be noted, however, that this confusion emerges most strongly in a depressed and confused Merlin. Arthur himself, both in the vows and in his treatment of the "rumours" about Lancelot and Guinevere, sticks rigidly to the distinction between grounded and ungrounded stories of transgression. (In the 1859 text, unlike the final version, it is very clear that Arthur knows what "wild things" the "wild people" say.)

talk". As such, it becomes a power for internalising the law — as the exemplary progress of Edyrn from suicidal resentment to wonder to self-examination and self-reform makes clear.

It would appear, then, that Arthur's project as envisaged by Tennyson constitutes an exploration of the utility of discipline as a force for normalisation in society. This sense is complicated by the poem's representation of the difficulties of this technology. Camelot projects its judicial authority as an attempt to make its subjects visible, and inculcates norms in those who are to wield this judicial gaze by placing them at the intersection of three networks in which they are seen and judged. However, Tennyson also depicts the extent and comprehensiveness of Arthur's knowledge of the Kingdom as a limited one, and imagines the technology of enclosure which ensures that the object of knowledge cannot escape surveillance as nightmarish. All four 1859 *Idylls* feature places and people who have heard of Camelot, but are unknown to it. Edyrn's town, tournament and recently built castle, Astolat, the hermit's cave "Hid by the grove/Of poplars" — all are within a day's ride of the King's administrative centres and under Arthur's protection, yet their denizens and their stories are imperfectly known, if at all, to the King's representatives. Two *Idylls* take place at the very edge both of jurisdiction and knowledge: the "wild woods of Broceliande" and the "waste" beyond the Usk. The knights quest to these "dark places", and are tested where no other surveillance than their internalisation of Arthurian norms runs. Merlin's fate also questions the paradigm of Camelot as a society wholly defined by surveillance. "Closed in the four walls of a hollow

tower/From which was no escape", he is the object of a panoptic confinement: consigned to a cell where he can see and be seen only by one person — "him who wrought the charm" of imprisonment (MV, 207-12). The experiment with architecturally manifest surveillance — with the institutional form in which surveillance was known by Tennyson's contemporaries — is in other words not Camelot's, but its enemies'. In both ways the poem represents Arthur's kingdom as one using surveillance, but stopping short of its complete deployment. In other words, the poem is very much not a Victorian precursor to hospital, prison or police drama. Arthur's idea is, rather, a relative of the more subtle, non-enfolding forms of surveillance bourgeois capitalism employs over the non-criminal and apparently normal — in Tennyson's time the discourse of respectability and the rising power of popular journalism. The poem, meanwhile, is both an examination of this kind of surveillance, and an examination of the effect disciplinary institutions have outside their confines.

As a result of this, Camelot places great emphasis on an element of power-knowledge which, at first glance, appears to contradict the mechanism of discipline: the mode of visibility of power. Along with many others in the poem, Arthur assumes a Carlylean model of history in which public "ensample" is the mainstay of the kingdom's progress or decay (G, 486-8, 663-4; LE, 1406-7; MV, 830-36).[23] In other

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[23]In the context of English historiography, it is better to talk of Carlyle here. Henry Kozicki notes that, as a whole, *Idylls of the King* mirrors Hegel's model of history — which the Tennyson's were reading

words, what the people see in their ruling class, the knowledge they have of those set over them, ensures that the King's law is obeyed — an analysis which would seem to imply the kind of power-knowledge relation Foucault has analysed as pre-disciplinary.[24] However, the kind of visibility the poem emphasizes in Camelot is in fact quite the opposite of this. Arthur does not envisage a law which is obeyed because it is violent and fearful, or because of spectacular but sporadic displays of its force. The Round Table is established in direct contradiction to both modes, seeking to reduce the general fear in which a populace ravaged by bandits and invaders live, and to regularise the activity of knight errantry. Visibility remains important for Arthur, but because in his analysis societies rise and fall as a result of their people's cognitive and imaginative activity of choosing and imitating role-models. The image projected by individual knights and the whole Round Table is, in other words, part of a normalising cognitive environment which constitutes what can be known and embraced as a practice of the self. Within the Court itself, the effect of this normalising environment is reinforced because the aforementioned image is also a representation of an individualising and normalising judgement of each knight and lady. In step with this, Arthur establishes protocols for the visibility of the law which

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in the mid-fifties. He also notes, however, that the main ideas in Hegel had entered English historiographical speculation some decades earlier, and had been absorbed by Tennyson at Cambridge. In the context we sketched in chapter two, Carlyle's concentration on heroes as energisers and originators of life-ideals contrasts with Macaulay's and Arnold's attention to institutions.

[24]Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* op. cit., 187 - 8.

mark that visibility as the kind power has in the disciplinary institution. The visibility of the law, that is, is such as to make it attractive to the subject, normalising the subject by inspiring a positive engagement with the law's norms.

There are two major components to this visibility, both having their strongest effect within the Court and Round Table, but also spilling out among the population as a whole. There is the mode of personal interaction and expression of the court (its "manners"), which includes the peculiar style and content of the ongoing soap-opera the Court and populace make of the lives of every knight at Camelot, and the King's use of iconography, ceremonial and *ex cathedra* harangue. In both spheres the visibility of authority and judgement is governed by an ideologically British aesthetics of administrative bearing and administrative glamour. The "iron fist" of power is to be cloaked, if not rendered virtually obsolete, by the "velvet glove" of its non-violent expression.[25] "Courtesy", for instance, is associated with a way of articulating values and judgements whose mode of efficacy recalls that of poetry. "That gentleness,/Which, when it weds with manhood, makes a man" (GE, 866-7) involves an attractive rather than self-aggrandising revelation of worth ("amiable words" rather

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[25]The link in the poem between knowledge and imperial power has been examined in Ian McGuire, "Epistemology and Empire in *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30, 3-4 (Autumn-Winter 1992), 387-400. McGuire, however, concentrates on the modality of power's knowledge of the other, not, as I do, on the connection of this knowledge to the modality of power's own visibility, and the effects this visibility has on power's subjects. For a poignant personal context of Tennyson's interest in the concept of "Gauntlet in a velvet glove", see "To the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava".

than "scorn", [G, 39-43]), a distaste for the crudely didactic ("noble reticence", the irony of Arthur's speech about Edyrn) and an emotional, rather than rational, reach. (Lancelot, the paragon of "manners", is full of "warmth"; the court's discourse is always "tender".) The intended result of such discourse is encapsulated in Edyrn's response: ready to defend his *amour-propre* aggressively against open "scorn" or "disdain", he instead is shocked, touched, prompted to self-examination and eventually to internalise the lawfulness represented in the Court's "fine reserve". The public art associated with the King, meanwhile, draws on images of polyvalence akin to Tennyson's notion of poetry as "shot-silk". His "wars" are "rendered mystically" on Camelot's gates (LE, 795-6). [26] The Pendragon which stands for his office is a "design" on his throne which endlessly proliferates, or one on a battle-standard which, like the cuirass-sleeve which blazons his religious affiliation, is seen as "mist[y]" and sinuously "lightening" reflectiveness (LE, 430-40, 292-5; G, 593-5). Other aspects of the public expression of power — Arthur's didactic commentaries at all public occasions, Elaine's tomb — comprise a simpler, homiletic representation of ethical principles. The tournament, for instance, is a one-dimensional "sight" of "prowess" and fair-play (and, notes Lancelot, a not necessarily accurate one [LE, 310-5]). Emerging from the combination of these forms, however, is a consistent technique. The "mystic" and iconographic representations draw their viewer to investigate significance independent of any obvious didactic message. The art of Elaine's tomb

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[26]The description in *The Holy Grail* of "mystic symbol[s]" within Camelot suggests that this means "allegorical" ("The Holy Grail", 232-9).

similarly is allowed to speak for itself, presented as an object of meditation for "all young lovers". Tournament, meanwhile, as a propagandising apparatus, is simply the raw material for the public production of reputation: a mechanism in which "crowd" and court are encouraged to make their own comparisons of the person and nobility of each practitioner of the law. Nowhere, in other words, does Arthur set up or exploit discursive procedures which leave the interlocutor no room for interpretative manoeuvre. Instead, what is preferred is a style of representation which encourages the interlocutor to engage with the representation, making his/her own elaboration of the values it entails. Even in the instances where Arthur makes clear what the law's norms are — to Geraint, at the Diamond Jousts, at Almesbury, to Gawaine — it is only as a last resort that his discourse denies the subject's autonomy or demonstrate the law as a coercive power. He does not directly accuse Geraint, his statements about the diamonds emphasize the rewards of lawful behaviour, his vituperative exposition of the law to Guinevere is reigned in to an expression of "hope" that she will "repent" and come to "love the highest". It is not that Arthur sees the subject as radically free to develop its own norms — quite the contrary — it is that the technique he employs veers toward the disciplinary: the subject must be given the freedom specifically to choose the law, and therefore the law must be made both loveable and not reliant on coercive power.[27]

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[27] Compare Claude Ryals' (op. cit., 73-4 et passim) assertion that Arthur seeks to curb the existential freedom of his subjects; and William Buckler's assertion, contrarily, that he seeks rather to inspire than to teach them (op. cit., 14 - 16).

The display of Arthurian power and norms is not allied to the disciplinary simply in its style — in the subjectivity it assumes in those over whom it intends to wield power. As in historiography and poetry, this object of power is also made an object of knowledge. We have already noted that the gossip of the court constitutes the expression of a mechanism of surveillance. Not only the construction of reputation of which this gossip forms part, however, but Camelot's iconography and public ceremonies of reward all parade stories and judgements which make visible those of Camelot's subjects who are under most pressure to internalise the law: namely the knights and ladies of the Round Table. Moreover, the vows suggest not only that Arthur sees this knowledge as a potential for good, but as incipiently individualising and normalising. The cognitive practice the vows authorise seeks to sharpen this factor. The insistence on personal honesty, distaste for "slander", enthusiasm for cognitive accuracy ("truth"), and "talk of noble deeds" frame public knowledge as something which can be known at first hand or verified, as representation only of valuable action and, as Merlin glosses it, as representation only of what is thought to model the subject's governing identity (not "the one dark hour which brings remorse" but what "practice burns into the blood" (MV, 759-62)). In other words, the vows imply that the cognitive substance of the representation of the law is at once reliable, purely a show of value (omitting what is abnormal or scandalous), and anchored in a specific epistemological construction of its human object. The latter is to be imagined as an autonomous, individual entity with an ascendant group of characteristics (achievements, quirks, style of interaction) and these are understood as the externalisation of an inner centre of moral identity.

Correlatively, each "deed" of any human subject is to be read both for its own characteristics and value, and for its relation to this posited core of identity in the actor. It is this control of content and structure, as well as style, which makes representation of the law effective: not only beautiful, but a crystallised portrait of the true and the good — as the icon of Elaine's *Liebestod* exemplifies.

That Camelot needs the law to be represented, both in the behaviour and bearing of its officers and in the rippling out of story from that behaviour, has a further important consequence. It means that the Arthurian practice of the self becomes structured like that of the historiographer and poet. Without the maintenance of a surface of reputation, one representing the practice of the law to the populace and the judgements of public surveillance to each knight and lady, the system with which Arthur hopes to promulgate law cannot prosper. As such, the Arthurian subject cannot be said to carry out the law merely by enforcing it or internalising its values ("fighting the heathen", "redressing wrong", learning "high thought"): he or she must also rehearse a specific hermeneutic and representational commitment. The vows encapsulate this commitment in their injunctions to "high talk", "love of truth", "manners" and aversion to "slander": in other words, to interpret others and to represent judgement in the ways outlined above. These practices are not only binding commitments for the knight who swears, but expected commitments of the women to whom they are or may be bound. Furthermore, the mental discipline of internalising the law is predicated as much in these cognitive and expressive practices as it is in military-judicial activity. In other words, there is a locus in the Arthurian practice of

the self which is identical to the locus which governs the practice of the self of the historiographer and poet. Normalising the other occurs via a discursive practice in which the subject internalises the law, represents it to others, and makes the other an object of knowledge and power. With the object of power-knowledge being both the subjectivity of the Court's denizens and each event in which those denizens are actors, there is even some approximation to the specific objects of power-knowledge of poetry and historiography.

This link is emphasized even further by the general characteristics of the self-discipline of the ideal knight, which mirror the mental discipline ascribed to poets or historians.[28] At the highest level this self-discipline is a way of directing and

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[28]This conjunction may also be related to an imperial identity. The *British Quarterly Review*, in its notice of *Idylls*, connected chivalric identity to the personal qualities of "the heroes in India" and the "Crimean soldier" (*British Quarterly Review*, 30 [1859], 483.). *Times* reporting of this war, around the incident of the Charge of the Light Brigade, conjoins the notions of spectacle, and a manhood whose commitment to the nation is expressed in its capacity to obey the command-structures which embody national reason in a situation where feeling dictates otherwise. Such a balance of moral will, thought and feeling in the successful battle of Alma is contrasted with the emotionalism of "the more Southern races". Because the actual command to the Light Brigade was irrational, the Charge itself could only appear as a "spectacle" of this identity, not its effectiveness. Tennyson's own poem responds precisely to this matrix. *Idylls*, in other words, is exploring a conjuncture of discipline, self-knowledge and national service which is an imperial as well as discursive practice of the self. The link between self-surveillance and nationalism has not, to my knowledge, been explored before. Tennyson's poem, and the case of the Light Brigade, suggests such a link, but its existence in a wider context needs further

channelling self-assertiveness into social leadership. It encourages the pursuit of recognition ("desire for fame") through a commitment to benefiting the social collective. It is also, however, a practice in which the whole self is concerned, and in which all aspects of the self are tuned. The knight is a fount both of emotional and intellectual energy (his "passion", his enthusiasm for "high thought") and of personal ethical authority (defining the self as one who can define and administer the law). These affirmations are tempered by his avoiding rough or small-minded emotions and judgements ("the base", "scorn") and deferring to figures of the moral and rational super-ego ("the conscience ... King"). Certain of the epistemological guarantees built into the vows also imply practices which recall those held over the historiographer and poet. The knight must be sincere and honest ("honouring [one's] ... word"), but also confine speech to what can be verified or personally witnessed. At the same time, the value of lengthy service — the values of perseverance and courage in continuing one's practice in the face of possibly hostile judgement — is a *sine qua non* for knight as well as poet and historiographer. The knight, after all, is bound to "win" his beloved only after "years of noble deeds".

In exploring the possibilities of surveillance, then, Tennyson's poem sees Camelot among other things as a discursive institution. It seeks to dominate its subjects by having them witness representations which are either directly or implicitly

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investigation. See, "An American view of the Battle of Alma", *Times*, 10 November 1854; see also the Editorial, *Times*, 13 November 1854; and *Times*, 14 November 1854, pp. 6-8.

an individualising and normalising knowledge of their own character and actions. At the same time, it posits its subjects as the wielders of this knowledge and this representation, asking them to constitute the discursive practice which expresses surveillance. As we have noted, however, Tennyson's poem interrogates and questions these techniques, rather than accepting them or their assumptions at face value. Along with the overarching narrative assumption of the Arthurian cycle, each of the four *Idylls* focuses on situations in which the discursive practice we have identified cannot be successfully completed — and in which therefore neither internalisation of the law nor the representation of surveillance can be achieved. In particular the poem investigates the whys and wherefores of situations in which the object of knowledge cannot or is not constructed as an individualised and normalised entity in a way which accurately reflects the determinations which govern the other. The narrative given of the Arthurian cycle highlights certain structural necessities of the system of surveillance and representation which make such situations well nigh unavoidable. In other words, in Camelot, Tennyson alights on and underlines possibilities which expose the limits of discipline.

For instance, if the Arthurian subject is to avoid "slander" and "scorn", repeating only "noble deeds", there is an obvious difficulty in representing to others "rumours", and actions which are ambiguous or, worse, "an open shame". On the face of it, these should simply be banished to a space of non-representation. Arthur, for example, knows of the "rumour[s] rife about the Queen" and turns them over in his mind, but does not give them credence by repeating them. The reasons behind this,

however, are not merely epistemological and ethical, but connected with the conditions of effectiveness of surveillance. Edyrn's punishment, for instance, consists merely in exposing him to the aesthesis which objectifies "noble" interiority, even though his "wolfish" deeds are not merely "rumours" but an established "shame". The representational restraint is necessary because it posits in Edyrn the subjectivity of discipline: it leaves space for an autonomous but mutable interiority to be totally transformed by exposure to a normalising ethical environment whose power derives from its attractiveness. However, this restraint also has an unintended effect on the epistemological structure of the representation of the law in Arthurian power-knowledge, un-problematic in Edyrn's case, but logically subversive of Camelot's whole enterprise. The very silence which posits the subjective condition of surveillance's effectiveness also entails that what is represented of a knight's or lady's behaviour in general discourse is not a measure of their internalisation of the law. It necessitates that the publicly circulated image of a knight or lady no longer promulgates a reliable linking of their interiority and exteriority in an individualised and normalised likeness. The image *may* reflect this link, but it *may* also hype up the subject's mere potential to internalise the law, or pretence at or partial completion of this process. [[29]] In other words, the social image of a knight or lady becomes *for certain* only an objectification of what the gaze of Arthurian power wishes to see, not what it in fact does or could see. This has two consequences for the relationship of

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[29] Something of this can be seen in Gawaine, Lancelot, Guinevere, Mordred and Merlin's comment: "I know the Table Round, .../ All brave, many generous and some chaste".

Arthurian representation to the populace and court. On the one hand, it suggests that this representation need not mean what it appears to mean and therefore need not make impressive what it purports to make impressive. That is, it renders Camelot's aesthesis unconvincing and structurally ineffective, and the publication of the judgements of surveillance escapable. More interestingly, it engenders an epistemological structure in Arthurian representation which contradicts and implodes the very technology of surveillance. After all, the injunction to silence about "rumour" or "open shame" does not merely affect the image of knights and ladies whose reputations are beset with such conditions. It means that one cannot assume that the spoken-out reputation of *any* knight or lady accurately measures the relationship between their interiority and their apparent actions. It posits behind the socially circulated knowledge of reputation some other knowledge of the subject which is accurate but invisible. In other words, it makes the proper object of surveillance's individualising and normalising knowledge — the thing to be measured and provoked to transformation — not what is surveyed but what is unsurveyed and therefore outside surveillance's transforming impetus. It makes the machinery of surveillance not only escapable, but always, in its very structure, necessarily escaped.

However, it is not simply the Arthurian subject's expressive restraint in the face of "rumour" which is problematic. The epistemology of "rumours" and of the contradictory appearance of the "open shame" also renders uncertain the hermeneutic practice which enables the Arthurian subject to produce the commonly agreed, individualising and normalising knowledge of others which is the condition of "noble

talk", and therefore of the public circulation of surveillance. This is because, in both circumstances, the "deeds" of a knight and lady cannot be definitively constituted as a series of agreed facts. Consequently, in both cases, the interpretative movement from the known "deeds" of an agent to the interior entity those deeds supposedly mirror also becomes uncertain. As a result, there is no authority outside each individual subject's guesswork in which to ground the construction of reputation either as an individualising and normalising surveillance of the other's interiority and action or as a normalising discursive representation of the law. This, again, has two associated consequences for the exploration of the technologies of power represented in the poem. It means that the subject of knowledge Tennyson represents within Camelot is placed in the exact position of the nineteenth century poet or historiographer faced with the raw material of subjectivity or historical record (or, indeed, with the corpus of Arthurian legend as a whole). Individualised and normalised entities must be constituted for knowledge on the basis of fragmentary, contradictory and dissociated information about them. The only check on this activity is the articulated result of manifold other, similar acts of judgement, of which there are two sources: the hermeneutic circle in which the process of knowing depends heavily on the subject's previously established determinations; and the discursive free for all in which the verdict of a majority or of a powerful voice standing in for that verdict dominates in the construction of norms. It means furthermore that, considered as a practice in which the subject is to normalise itself, interpretation of the activity of the Round Table becomes at once unstable and inherently resistant to attempts to change dominant, actually practised standards of behaviour. There is no longer a unified,

relatively unambiguous set of facts which direct interpretation toward a single, easily agreed image of what value is. There is no longer an authoritative centre of normalising judgement toward which all evidences point — despite the insistence of Camelot's political structure that the King is this centre. There is only a confusing multiplicity of appearances, a confusing multiplicity of individualised and normalised images of value, and a confusing multiplicity of agonistic practices which are produced by and in the linking of the two.

Tennyson's poem focuses on the fate of disciplinary techniques in the hermeneutic and representational conditions outlined above. It explores the personalities, dilemmas and development of the knights and ladies of Arthurian legend as practices of the self which conform to the general structure of the poetic and historiographical practice of the self. It scrutinises their component practices of self-normalisation, knowing the other and representing the law to the other, portraying the legends' narrative *Stoff* as a series of interpretative, expressive and psychological cruxes for the King's project. Ultimately, it suggests that the circulation of surveillance in representation and discipline's mode of drawing in the subject are inadequate as techniques for promulgating the internalisation of the Victorian sense of the law (that is, as a peculiar kind of selflessness, a peculiar directing of Might).[30]

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[30] This argument pinpoints an aspect of *Idylls of the King* which symbolist and existential critics have made much of, namely, its interest in the deep self as a cognitive and imaginative entity, and the relation of this self to Arthur's own enterprise. Where my analysis differs from that of, say, Claude

Enid

In "Enid", as in the other four 1859 *Idylls*, Tennyson examines surveillance as an intimate but also reciprocal structure of judgement, expression and self-elaboration. Its central narrative — the establishing and cementing of Geraint and Enid's marriage as a model Arthurian relationship — depicts the way two tightly bound, relatively isolated subjects bring about restorative change in each other's psycho-discursive structure. Like "Guinevere" and "Elaine", but without their supplementary narratives of personal tragedy and political belatedness, it describes an arc in which Arthurian institutions suffer initial breakdown but are ultimately effective. At first subject to disruptions and failures of relationship which issue from their suspicions of the subject and object of surveillance, Geraint and Enid heal each other through a conjunction of the dialogic structures of poetry and surveillance. These concerns are carried forward through an interrogation of the typologies of the poetries of sensation and reserve, and the problematics of "rumour" and expressive restraint.

Ryals or William Buckler is in the connection of this problematic to that of the disciplinary institution. I am suggesting that the poem does not analyse the self as an existential given, but as something constituted in socialized practice, and interpellated by the ideological apparatus of surveillance. Arthur fails not because he attempts to restrict the deep self, or because it is a mysterious welling-forth of

At the very beginning of "Enid", Tennyson establishes Geraint as a character committed to Arthurian norms in his apparent romantic, religious and political loyalties, but whose hermeneutic and representational practice is questionable. This instability is examined through the typology of the poet of sensation. The Prince, "a tributary Prince of Devon", "one of that great Order of the Table Round,"

> ... loved [Enid] as he loved the light of Heaven,
> And as the light of Heaven varies, now
> At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night
> With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint
> To make her beauty vary day by day
> In crimsons and in purples and in gems. (MG, 5-10)

This posits three marks of poetic sensibility as founding elements in Geraint's practice of the self. Geraint's subjectivity is structured by joyous response to a natural world seen as canopying God; by a sense of this world as analogy for the subject's interiority; and by the impulse to give public expression to such cognitions by representing them in forms of kaleidoscopic "beauty". This structure is characterized in addition, however, by a keen voluptuousness not unlike that of Tennyson's early

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energy which can only be self-directed, but because his *institutions* posit for their own efficacy a self which is free to fall.

(and by 1859 long forsaken) poetry of sensation,[31] and by an excessive overlap of interiority and the perceptual world. If Geraint loves Enid in precisely the way he loves "light", after all, there should be no need to "*make* her beauty vary": the sky needs no intervention from the subject for it to change. Geraint's drive to expression, in other words, though poetic and romantic, is also an implicitly paranoid enactment of the pathetic fallacy: not simply the imagined population of the world of nature with an interiority mirroring his own, but an attempt to control and change the other, forcing it to match the world within.

The rest of "Enid" expands on and complicates this initial presentation of Geraint's character, linking it to an anxiety produced in him as the subject and object of Camelot's mechanisms of surveillance. Consider the layers of response which envelop the quest where he and Enid meet. The quest begins when, having "missed the hunt", Geraint proves unable to perform a simple knightly task under the eyes of the Queen and is wounded and dirtied by a "dwarf". His initial, homicidally enraged reaction is sublimated in the quest's more formal undertaking to strip wrong-doing's veil of secrecy: a task both he and Guinevere saturate with allusions to heroic, romantic and religious narrative (the Prince will return in "three days"; Guinevere's

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[31]The riches, the fabrics, the expanded eroticization of the "night", recall "Recollections of the Arabian Nights".

'beggar to princess' promise).[32] In other words, confronted with circumstances which embarrass his normality as an object of surveillance, Geraint veers between wanting brutally to "Abolish" the situation and an effort to satisfy Arthurian norms which involves their performance in an exaggerated and aestheticising form. This movement signals the Prince's commitment to being an Arthurian subject, but is shown to be problematic in displacing rather than resolving his pathetic fallacy. It is not merely that both alternatives include the use of violence against the other so that the other will co-operate in Geraint's self-image (a factor Guinevere acknowledges when, without apparent cause, she drastically re-focuses the proposed quest so that it involves a search for love as well as revenge). Nor is it that the quest fails to erase the distress of the failure (the Prince airbrushes it from the account of the meeting he gives under Yniol's and Enid's gaze, and is spurred by its memory to a new height of rage when he finally does public battle with Edyrn).[33] It is that the aestheticisation of the quest pledges Geraint to an unsustainable position as the subject of knowledge, one which can only result in his being returned at once to aggression and to anxiety about his image as an Arthurian subject. This is made clear when, on the quest,

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[32]"Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,/And on the third day will again be here", "And may you ... wed with her whom first you love,/ ... /And I, were she the daughter of a king,/Yea, though she were a beggar from the hedge,/Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun." (MG, 215-31). Geraint's aesthetic priorities are emphasized by his remaining "vext" at missing a particularly refined show of cervicide.

[33] William Buckler also points out Geraint's ingenuousness about his sense of his own failure (op. cit., 82-3, 84 et passim).

Geraint is faced with the defining existential moment of the Arthurian male as subject and object of surveillance — his choice of a woman to love. Encouraged by Guinevere to approach this moment in highly romanticised terms, Geraint falls in love in an emplotment of sensuous imagery which is archetypally that of the poet of sensation. Enid is "the one ... for me" because her voice moves him like the nightingale and because the chiaroscuro in which he first beholds her makes her like a lily. The feeling which accompanies this image at first entails Geraint's self-control (he does not immediately pursue Enid out of "utter courtesy"). However, because the image's epistemology warrants nothing about Enid's feelings, he becomes plagued with doubt about the reality of his narrative of love, twisting Guinevere's promise in order to exact proofs of conformity which turn his feeling into quasi-rapist fantasy (he eyes his obedient bride-to-be "As the robin eyes the delver's toil").

In these circumstances the epistemological cruxes of proofless "rumour" about Guinevere and Geraint's knightly commitment not to repeat "slander" inevitably become critical. Both make the cognitive uncertainty which accompanies the pathetic fallacy a continuous and structural rather than adventitious and intermittent element of the most important relationships in Geraint's Arthurian self-image. Under their unremitting discursive pressure Geraint falls into ever more coercive and self-defeating efforts to preserve that image. At first manifest in lies, dereliction of knightly training and uxorious "observances", this breakdown becomes critical when he half hears Enid's soliloquoy. Unable to resolve the contradiction between what "love and reverence" commit him to and what Enid's words may mean, forbidden also

to voice his suspicions, he can only assuage doubt by setting up a gross and tyrannous version of the Arthurian narrative. Enid must become the powerless girl he first knew; witness him performing for her the "wonder" of "onslaught single on a realm"; and be allowed not even the remotest possibility of questioning this image.

Cognitive and expressive practice underlie Geraint's breakdown and their transformation underlies his recovery. This is borne out in Tennyson's depiction of Geraint regaining his trust in Enid's love. It is not sufficient for Geraint merely to see that Enid protects his back, does his will or "weeps for me". He can only be convinced by the vision of Enid's autonomy as an Arthurian subject — that is, by allowing himself a hermeneutic relation to her which reproduces the one Arthur strives for and which undoes the structure of the poet of sensation's pathetic fallacy. This occurs when, facing the possibility of rape or death at the hands of Earl Doorm and believing that Geraint cannot protect her, Enid nevertheless repeatedly maintains her unconditional love for the Prince: that is, in circumstances which Geraint neither controls nor can construe as ambiguous. That this episode does indeed resolve Geraint's instability as an Arthurian subject as well as curing his pathetic fallacy is symbolized in two ways. First of all, as a result of the episode, Geraint acknowledges and undertakes to redeem his unsatisfactory enactment of the vows. The terms in which he makes this promise — he will not "ask [the] meaning" of Enid's statement that she has been "no true wife" — show him relinquishing his stance of absolute discursive control in relationships through which he imagines his Arthurian subjectivity. He will neither be disturbed by interpretative anomaly nor force Enid to

play out his image of her as a contributor to his myth. The comprehensiveness of this change is confirmed not only by the narrative assurance that Geraint never again distrusted Enid, but in his three-fold repetition of the evidence whose ambiguity he will now let go. In other words, at the heart of Geraint's transformation is a transformation of the discursive practice through which he treated his fundamental relationships as elements in a pathetic fallacy. This transformation, moreover, leads immediately to a change in Geraint's internalisation of the vows. No longer "spleenful", braggish or self-deceiving about his enactment of Arthur's programme, he accepts the King's admonishment that a knight's highest priority is "the vicious quitch of nature" within, and becomes the exemplary dispenser of justice he always wanted to be.

How does this trajectory function as an exploration of the technology of surveillance? As well as making discursive relationships the fulcra of the psychological process of internalisation, it focuses on the resolution of instabilities which occur within the relationship of surveillance itself. We have already noted that the roots of Geraint's anxiety are fears generated in his position as subject and object of surveillance. Enraged by the desire to avenge his humiliation before Guinevere, stung by the suspicion that his wife no longer rates him, his constant response is the ostentatious emplotment of his normality before these audiences. Even his love of "gaudy" in Enid mushrooms from these responses, tying aesthetic and erotic preference both to star-struck gratitude for Guinevere's compensatory promise in the face of his initial failure and to over-compensation for the guilt he feels at the first

consequences of his hermeneutic unease. We must also note a second major trigger to action in Geraint, however, which underscores the issue of the relationship of surveillance. Each of the defining moments of Geraint's relationship with Enid have a very particular hermeneutic structure. They are all relationships in which he is placed as the overhearer of an apparently unself-conscious overflow of emotion. That is, they are all situations which at once literalize a dominant trope in the Victorian understanding of poetic interpretation, and make Geraint the subject of surveillance and object of expression while leaving Enid as the object of surveillance and subject of expression. In other words, the poem explores surveillance as a two way process, one in which the manipulation of subjectivity is as much a consequence of being positioned as the subject of the disciplinary mechanism as being its object.

Enid's part in this process is represented through the typology of the poet of reserve and, like Geraint's, is a predicament in which discursive practice and the processes of internalising the law and carrying it out are intertwined. In the situations in which Enid's acts of expression trigger critical psychological developments in the Prince (her song, her soliloquoy, her defiance of Earl Doorm) two typologies are apparent. On the one hand, there is a trajectory in which she moves from a wholly domestic expression, through expression which she feels ought to negotiate the demands of public normality, to an "unmoved" exhibition of feeling and commitment before a hostile audience. On the other hand, while in each situation Enid does not know that Geraint overhears her, she nonetheless always envisages an audience of which he may be a member insofar as he can take up the position of one who

represents the normative judgement she is internalising. That is, Tennyson charts her development from the fearful disavowal of the "staring crowd" and self-disguise before it which characterizes the reserved poet to a quasi-Carlylean vision of the sensitive but "true" expressive poet. At the same time, he tropes this development in two further ways. First, it occurs under the archetypal dialogic structure of the panopticon: one where only the norms the surveyor represents are known, not the identity of the surveyor. Second, it is a development in which the object of surveillance enters more and more into a dialogic encounter with its subject: the object's display of norms not merely indicating her internalisation of them, but her increasing effectiveness as an agent of normalisation in surveillance's subject.

At first, Enid sings — even expresses her preferences — only when she thinks she is alone and therefore wholly unchallenged by the presence of external judges. This does not mean that her psyche is constructed outside the terms of surveillance, but that the typology of the poet of reserve is being explored as an hermeneutic and expressive anxiety produced within surveillance. In her song about "Fortune", for instance, Enid defines herself as the object of knowledge of a "staring crowd" who judge generosity and value according to material power and wealth, and suggests a further, unseen audience for whom value is a matter of the subject's interiority. (Her father uncertainly embodies the latter.) This self-definition, however, is fraught with instability. Nervous of any discourse which represents her (escaping when she hears her name mentioned), she fears that no judgement can be sympathetic and is so insecure about the figure she cuts under examination that she cannot maintain her own

hermeneutic standards, even as an assessment of herself. She dreams of the cruelty of "that strange, bright and dreadful thing, a Court" and does not fight its imagined judgement: even when awake she "long[s] for" the costume which will deflect cruelty. This deeply privatised state is a problematic one because it means Enid cannot fulfil any function as an Arthurian maid, representing Arthur's norms as an emotionally compelling figure in the knight's psyche. Her practice as the mere object of surveillance and as a reserved expresser of herself means that, in their first encounter, she merely inflames Geraint's dangerous aestheticism. Similarly, once married to him, unable subsequently even to think of herself as worthy to pass judgement on Geraint, she can only pander to that aestheticism, seeking "to please [his] eye,/Who first had found her in a state of broken fortunes".

The subsequent development of her character entails the purging of Enid's discursive anxiety, the stabilizing of her allegiance to the hermeneutics she already holds, and emergence as a figure whose expressions of a normalised self are impressive enough to affect the subject who surveys her. This process begins as Enid becomes the conduit for the judgement "the staring crowd" pass on her husband — that is, as she is made party to the circulation of surveillance she imagined in her song. Placed by her servants' gossip as the subject of a judgement which contrasts sharply with her own standards and which would also not be heard at Court (because it does not separate internal worth from appearance and because it is critical), she agonizes over her possible failure before her own and the Court's normative examination. This failure, however, is no longer about the way she presents herself as the object of

Geraint's desire, but about the way she passes judgement upon him and represents judgement to him. Identifying with the Court's "noble reticence" and her own sense that worth is internal, she comes to understand that to "stand by" passively watching Geraint defeat evil is an insufficient performance of love and duty. She must instead become the subject of an interpretative and expressive practice which both appreciates Geraint's inner self and implicitly tasks him for falling into ill-repute, telling him "what I feel and what they say". At this stage, however, she is still contained by a dialogic anxiety whose subjectivity is that of the poet of reserve: too sensitive to speak out even in the limited publicity of her own marriage, she is driven to articulation only by a "piteous" emotional pressure which demands release. She is therefore heard only fragmentarily, allusively and with compromised sympathy for her real internal condition. Far from revealing herself as a normalised subject — that is, becoming a subject of judgement upon Geraint at the same that she is the object of his surveillance — she merely drives him to a frenzied and coercive effort to prove her normality.

In his plunge "to the wilds" and in flat contradiction to his intentions Geraint effectively exposes Enid to a training in her autonomy as the subject of expression under surveillance. She is confronted repeatedly with situations in which she must decide to speak out, without the "leave" and in the face of the hostility of her hearers. The contrariness of these situations and Geraint's responses in them compel her further to develop discourse which at once articulates her own unostentatious manner and will to speak, reveals her identity as an individualised and normalised object and affects others as a powerful statement of a normalised view of reality. In other words,

learning autonomy as an Arthurian subject she also learns how to *publish* the self in the mode of the poet of reserve. Her first forays in this direction, however — informing Geraint of lurking "ambuscade" — are merely emotionally blunted statements of fact, contrasting markedly with Geraint's symbolic excess but also giving no hint of the subjectivity which motivates them. It is only as encounters multiply that Enid learns gradually to construct and make public images of that subjectivity (what Keble would call her ethos) which defy the expectations of those she addresses herself to. Dissembling her real feelings before Limours, attempting the next day to project love and pain to Geraint through the intricacies of apology and explanation, her discourse starts to include representations of her feelings and desire and to develop a distinctive rhetorical economy — its "sweet,/Low spoken and ... few words", its sparing irony, repetition, and synechdoche.

In the poem's analysis of expression, surveillance and normalisation, however, Enid's growing rhetorical autonomy and capability guarantee neither that she will communicate her ethos or that, if she does, her beholder will accept the norms she represents. This is clear in the exchange between her and Earl Doorm. Because he insistently refuses to acknowledge her feelings, she is compelled to a total declaration of ethos in circumstances which literalize her old song's vision of a vast hostile and an unseen supportive examination. At the same time, she is compelled to discourse which is increasingly hyperbolic, culminating in the discursively and psychologically intense trope of her "poor dress" — an emblem simultaneously of the events which brought about her plight, the ongoing movement of her identity and a normative

judgement upon both. Yet even this finally overt personal poetry merely provokes Doorm to "unknightly" violence, as its less developed equivalents provoked Geraint to suspicion at home and "in the wilds" (ll. 418 - 35). Only when the subject beholding Enid has a hermeneutic position which reproduces that of a reader of poetry does her now normalised self-expression generate normalisation in that subject. It is Geraint's life which becomes re-directed by Enid's finally public aesthesis, in other words, because it is Geraint, not Doorm, who is addressed in the mode of one who overhears, rather than one toward whom the subject of expression is "harder than tyrants in their day of power". This conclusion (that surveillance can be a mutually normalising mechanism which depends on poetic self-expression and poetic overhearing) is reinforced by the encounter which occurs immediately after Geraint and Enid are reconciled. Edyrn describes as his experience in the context of the whole Court what the Prince has just gone through with his wife. Fearing ridicule he is normalised by a Courtly discourse which, like Enid's, is "reticent" and which, again like Enid's, does not address him personally but a generalised audience before whose norms the subject of expression maintains itself ("that great Order of the Table Round").

Vivien

"Vivien" explores the same underlying questions as "Enid" (the anxiety of surveillance and instabilities in the discursive practices associated with it), but via the

types of the historian and poetaster rather than of the poet of reserve or sensation. Unlike the other three texts of 1859, it demonstrates the total failure of Camelot to maintain its values in the subject. As elsewhere in the poem, however, Tennyson does not focus on the moment of failure itself — being even less interested in the moment in which seduction is successful than Milton in *Paradise Lost* — but on the conditions which preclude success. As such, the poem concentrates on the destructive confrontation of narratives, songs, interpretations and self-representations within the *process* of seduction and the psychic situation suggested by the legend of Merlin's submission to Nimue. It blows up the discursive problematic of the previous poem, giving protagonists who conduct themselves self-consciously and articulately as subjects and objects of Camelot's whole social project, and whose psycho-discursive formations are much less ready to adapt than those in the previous poem. It also generalizes and intensifies the question of the anxiety of surveillance, both representing that anxiety in a far more debilitating instance than "Enid" and suggesting that it is integral to Arthurian subjectivity rather than the personal accident it appears in "Enid". Finally, it establishes conditions in which surveillance can be wholly erroneous, exploring the possibility of the subject of expression misleading the subject of surveillance, neither internalising the latter's norms nor earning its punishment. These issues are confronted through the typologies of the commercial poet and the historiographer.

It is clear from the whole thrust of Merlin's discourse that the "melancholy" which assails him is not only about his relation with death and debility (loss of "life

and use") but his relation to public historical memory ("name and fame"). That is, as with Geraint and Enid, Merlin suffers a troubled relation between himself and the discourse which makes him an object of surveillance. However, for Merlin, this relation is not only contradictory and difficult, but represented as the pivotal question, both for his own identity and in his analysis of the psychology and success of Camelot. On the surface of his discourse, what dominates is disillusion with the circuit which connects deeds and their retelling. The knight should follow "use" rather than "fame"; truth is to be found independent of the "crowd", the "half-disfame" of reputation and the impurity of the circulating discourse which arises from "base interpreters". However, many indicators reveal that Merlin is much more decisively imbricated in this circuit than he admits. The symbolic intensity of his disgust at the spectacle of the processes which make reputation impure is one such indicator, as is his avowal of the utility of this circuit ("Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame again/Increasing gave me Use"). More important, however, is his personal myth of the foundation of Camelot, to whose site he has half-intentionally returned and which reveals that for him this circuit is inseparable from his own or indeed any commitment to Arthur. As Merlin recalls it, the emotional community of the Round Table begins in the pursuit not merely of the law, but of deeds which will provide raw material for the endless social production of spectacular, exciting, heroic narratives. A group of knights, he included, gathered in Broceliande hoping to knit themselves into the stuff of local (and wider) legend by hunting down "the hart with golden horns". They made plans to regularise this kind of activity and make their band "the flower of all the world". One of them broke into "song", filled with "fire" for that time when their

"names" would be symbols of the heroic endeavour to establish civilisation. They set off in pursuit of the "hart", only to alight upon another protagonist of magic and legend ("the little well that laughs at iron") — a circumstance which immediately becomes grist to the mill of the emerging reputation of the Kingdom: "the little well that laughs at iron ... *as did our warriors*" [emphases added]. For Merlin, in other words, the Arthurian subject is never without the awareness that he performs as the object of a normative judgement relayed in oral and world history. Moreover, this awareness is not a debilitating or minatory one, but a function of the subject's enthusiasm for and internalisation of Arthur's norms. The knight is driven by his connection to this intermediary discursive surface: by his desire to bulk largely, attractively and permanently under its examination. Inevitably, given this view of the Arthurian subject, any uncertainty in the connection between action and historical reputation — any sense that the latter is not constituted by norms like Arthur's or that it misunderstands the subject — becomes a grave threat. The anxiety of surveillance which leads Geraint on exorbitant and uncertain "quests for honour", in other words, here becomes intertwined with the very founding impulses of the Arthurian subject, rather than being seen as a danger incidental to it.

Troping this psychic dependence on reputation and functional complicity between discursive and psycho-social practice, Tennyson explores in Merlin a new solution to the hermeneutic and expressive problem of surveillance. Deeply aware of the problematic of public interpretation of events and the knights' reliance upon them, Merlin distances himself from the interpretative, aesthetic and psycho-ethical stances

of the model of poetry, approaching instead those of historiography. This is a matter both of the personal investments of his own version of Arthurian practice and of the adjustments he champions within the general production of that practice. It is an attempt simultaneously to revise the subject's dependence on Fame and to make the production of discourse which determines Fame at once accurate and consistently normative. First, Merlin conceives his life's work as driven by the imperatives of a strictly historical notion of personal worth and a quasi-historiographical conformation of the self. He is pledged to a direct "hold upon the world" which combines tasks of high-profile executive service and "giv[ing people] greater wits". He also practices an internalisation of the law which rigorously instrumentalises feeling and pleasure under a regime dominated by reason. These investments are important because they reduce the intensity of the subject's connection to two of the mechanisms of surveillance in Camelot: the discourses of public narrative and the lover. Though nostalgic for the Round Table's youthful romantic enterprise, as we have seen, Merlin now demands that the abstract reward of the work itself be sufficient, "Fame" merely increasing "Use", not taking "rest or pleasure in itself" (MV, 469-92). He also conceives sensuality as something to be satisfied but not integrated into the practice of the self as the loving knight does (MV, 544). In other words, Merlin's historiographical subjectivity is an attempt to control and miminize personal imbrication in the uncertain circuitry which makes reputations out of deeds. Second, what the poem emphasizes in Merlin's understanding of his commitment is not the know-how he contributes to the state-historical project (the astronomical and technological acquirements with which he is first introduced) but his discursive practice and his

attempts to promulgate his version of Arthurian self-production. There are two sides to the former. On the one hand, there is the constant interpretative work which has given Merlin the aforementioned know-how: "the range of all their arts" which enables him to "buil[d] ... havens, ships and halls" and to know "the starry heavens" (MV, 165-8). As he explains when remembering how he found the "charm", he is knowledgeable because he has spent the "long sleepless nights of my long life" in intense philological analysis of documents which comprise all that remains of bygone civilisations (MV, 666-81). On the other hand, there is his self-appointed role as constable of the production of reputation. He is represented as completing this task according to the interpretative and narrative patterns of historiography. Faced with the storm of innuendo and rumour which constitutes the sources of Camelot's public image, he seeks to "know the tale[s]" and sift them for fact through such means as comparison of dates and comparison with other evidence of personality (MV, 711-77). Once appraised of these facts, he promulgates discourse which does not disguise them, but which *is* discrete about self-righteous casting of opprobrium on other subjects, neither avoiding the unpalatable nor viciously debunking the object of judgement — an act of retelling which matches what Macaulay, for instance, says of Sir James Mackintosh. In this way, as in the episode where he swaps tales with Vivien, Merlin hopes both to scotch inaccuracies in public narrative and refine its yardstick of virtue — reducing oral history's instability and hence the menace of the subject's dependence on it.

Tennyson explores in the character of Vivien conditions which destabilise

those practices. He has Merlin confront in her both an instance of Camelot's psychological reliance on oral history and a way of handling that reliance which at once directly opposes the choices of his historiographical practice and is an unsurmountable test for them. That is, as well as finding in Vivien a woman motivated by an animus like his, Merlin finds a woman who makes oral history the disintegrated narrative he fears, one who he cannot change by representing Camelot's deeds for what they really are and one whose own deeds are of a kind he cannot construct a stable genetic narrative of. She is all the more problematic in that the epistemological structure constituted by her insincere expressive practice is in fact no more than a repetition of the gap between exteriority and interiority that Camelot's ideology of restraint already produces. Vivien is not the exception, in other words, but the rule so far as Camelot's hermeneutic condition is concerned. Just as he had examined the conditions of success of surveillance as merging the dialogic structures of surveillance and poetic expression, Tennyson thus explores discipline's failure by merging the dialogic structures of surveillance with those rendering history unwritable. All of these problems are held together in the figure of Vivien by a further extant Victorian typology of hermeneutic, expressive and ethical subjectivity: that of the insincere or commercial poet.

In the 1859 text the only motive Vivien has stems from what she assumes is her poor showing in public narrative. Because she had once been the object of "laughter", "She hated all the knights, and heard in thought/Their lavish comment when her name was named", feeling one of her few "true" emotions when Merlin

reminds her how she "dream[s] they babble". In other words, Vivien is driven by the same anxiety of surveillance as Merlin, Geraint and Enid, though more overtly and negatively than they. This anxiety, however, in a serious extension of Geraint's trouble, does not equate with the internalisation of the values of surveillance, but with a realisation that the subject of expression need only acquire attitudes which satisfy those norms and can also manipulate those norms themselves. Like Merlin, in other words, she attempts at once to negotiate the circuit connecting deeds and reputation and to control the general social production of that circuit. In her case, this involves a self-presentation, and a representation of the Round Table, which opens a gap between performance and sincerity. Like the Byronic poet as conceived by Henry Taylor, she determines to seek the approval of the subject of surveillance by exciting its self-indulgence or amazement, rather than its considered judgement. She aims to impress Merlin and gain "glory" in the eyes of oral history not by internalising the values their examination supposedly represents but by an act of expressive legerdemain which at once diverts their attention and draws it to take pleasure in less stringent values than it admits. At the same time, she engages in a further hermeneutic and expressive activity connected like Merlin's with the production of oral history — gathering all the scandalous and doubtful interpretations of events she can, ready at every opportunity to enliven conversation with "faint points of slander". In both ways, Vivien's practice seeks to maximise the epistemological uncertainties endemic to Arthurian practice, exploiting "rumour" and reticence about unpalatable facts to make the structuring of "talk" in terms of Arthurian norms appear less and less authoritative.

To achieve this, Vivien's discourse and practice are necessarily double faced and ambiguous. On the one hand, she reproduces some of the adventitious surface elements of "noble talk" and Arthurian deed, though none of those which suggest a serious encounter with the values that style symbolizes. On the other hand, she promulgates deeds of narration which are overtly antagonistic to Arthurian norms, supporting instead a racier standard of value more congenial to what she believes are her own tendencies. The structure and characteristics of both practices are associated with Victorian ideas of commercial poetry. First, at the level of motivation, while seeking to bulk large in the public imagination like any knight, Vivien seeks only a sensational impact — to "gain/Him the most famous man of all those times" — and neither considers nor cares about the social effects of that impact. Second, at the level of projected subjectivity, Vivien continually packages herself both to Merlin and "the crowd" according to a stereotype attractive to her audience: she is a girl so much in love with "her Master" as to be careless of her reputation. This stereotype is, however, rhetorically rather than un-self-consciously deployed: it is a tool deliberately exploited both to gain sympathy ("O [my name and fame] have ebbed away for evermore/And all through following you") and to deflect criticism (as occurs at the end of the poem). Third, at the level of her relation to the public production of story, though she is a store of lyrical and narrative fertility, a conduit for knowledge of the knights, she has no regard either to reliable sources or the preservation of discursive unity (as both her description of the song with which she serenades Merlin and the midrash with which she disrupts his narrative reply show). Finally, at the level of "noble talk" itself, while her mode of speech mimics that of refinement, particularly in

terms of its capacity to rhetorically heighten the stereotyped emotions of refinement, the discourse is always most eloquent when returning attention to the "boon" she desires. It is, in other words, the self-centred self-expression Patmore among others decried, self-indulgently focusing on what the expresser wants and feels (the "boon") rather than communicating this merely as a by product of mimesis.

Why, as Tennyson represents it, does Merlin fail to negotiate the dilemma Vivien presents, while Vivien successfully resists his discourse? As in the happy outcome of "Enid", it is the mutual interaction of hermeneutic, expressive and psycho-social subjects which matters: the peculiar challenge Vivien's commercial discourse poses to historiographical modes of interpretation in the peculiar condition of apathy Merlin suffers. Vivien succeeds not because Merlin abandons an untenable normalisation of human nature and gives in to sexual desire (as she seems herself to believe) but because she inadvertently plays on Merlin's weariness at resisting the spectacle of epistemological uncertainty and the instability of reputation. She becomes the "gnat,/That settles, beaten back, and beaten back/Settles", maintaining that spectacle and the pain it is associated with until Merlin is "overtalked and overworn", plaguing him until the desire for relief determines him to "tell her the charm" even though he only "half believes". In one respect, this is a matter of the rewards she offers Merlin — all constant reminders of suppressed but pleasurable elements of the founding moment of his commitment to Arthur. Vivien "flatters his wish for love in age", allowing him both the indulgence of sensuality and providing him with an intimate and supportive narrator of his own deeds. More important,

however, is the way her discourse always maintains Merlin in "half-belief", at once avoiding signals of untrustworthiness Merlin can depend on, and keeping him in doubt and irritation. It is this balancing act that the confrontation of the expressive characteristic of commercial poetry and the hermeneutic protocols of history permit. First, the commercial poet's glib but uncentred reconstruction of norms stymies suspicion in a man committed to downplaying aesthetic sensitivity, but still touches upon his fears and increases his anxiety. [34] The stereotyped self and rhetorically bulked out emotions specifically muffle any penetration of her cynical values — as is clear both at the beginning and end of the poem, when she dispels the "mind-mist" which identifies her as the cause of his melancholy and melodramatically recovers from the disaster of telling tales without that penumbra. Moreover, the aspects of her discourse which signal poetic shortcomings — always harping on her "boon", its celebration of discursive dispersal — are for Merlin only proof that she corresponds to stereotype or a subsidiary element of the quite different problem of history's hermeneutic instability. Second, Vivien's discourse maintains itself in an ambiguous relation to her interiority, such that Merlin cannot come to a considered completion of the historiographical task of assessing her as a source. Not only does this demand a continually renewed effort on his part, it also draws from him the historian's lenience. "Half-believ[ing] her true", it is easy for Merlin to give Vivien the same benefit of the doubt he gives Lancelot and Guinevere and other knights who are not "generous" or

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[34]See Henry Taylor, "Preface", *Phillip van Artevelde*, op. cit., xii-xvi for an instance of the above association in critique of Byron.

"chaste", treating her as if truth dominates.

Elaine

Unlike the first two *Idylls,* "Elaine" does not focus on surveillance as an agonistic confrontation between subjects and objects of knowledge. Rather, it at once broadens and deepens the problematic which these poems have introduced: the anxiety of surveillance and the subject's psycho-discursive negotiation with the society of surveillance. First of all, it represents the mutually transformative encounter between subjects and objects in terms of brief or non-private contacts. In other words, in accordance with the wider institutional gamble on which Arthur's "fancy" is based, it considers surveillance roles in an actively, rather than merely notionally, non-confined social space. Second, it examines the result of that encounter in terms of the deep-seated and highly personalised psycho-social determinants on each protagonist's practice rather than merely of the adjustment to each other of hermeneutic and expressive situations. While concentrating like "Vivien" on figures who are relatively self-conscious about the relation between their personal practice and the Arthurian project as a whole, it explores the anxiety of surveillance in terms of underlying patterns of personality — as a question of sanity, not of ethics. Third, it re-visits the issues of poetic practice examined in the first two poems, but in figures less compromised than theirs by animus or bluntness of insight. It questions the adequacy of poetic interpretation and poetic expression by asking the only

actual poet represented in the *Idylls* to solve the epistemological dilemma of a fully poetic but nonetheless unreliable self-actualisation. These issues are explored in the character of Elaine through a typology which is both that of a specific theorisation of the poet and an underlying assumption of much early to mid-century poetic theory, namely, the poetry of empathy or sympathetic projection.[35] They are explored in Lancelot, on the other hand, through a combination of typologies whose characteristics in some ways approach Tennyson's own: conservative typologies of idyllic social poetry and epic.

The first twenty-seven lines of the poem immediately establish that Elaine is a character in crisis. Like Geraint, she is an apparently unexceptionable Arthurian subject — "fair", "loveable", ardent about "noble" action — but one caught in a doubtful aspect of that commitment. She has isolated herself from "household and good father", and her rehearsal of normative Arthurian themes has become a compulsive, repetitious "fantasy". The discursive terms of this practice are established in the same conflicting way: at once suggesting aesthetic sensibility and,

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[35] It has been suggested that the figure and fate of Elaine are a commentary upon the specific problems of the Pre-Raphaelite art of the 1850s. While the dilemma of Elaine's art does bear some relation to Pre-Raphaelite practice, it should be noted that (a) unlike theirs, her art is broadly self-representative rather than mimetic, and (b) that Tennyson's depiction of Elaine focuses explicitly and repeatedly on the sympathetic/projective intensity of Elaine's sensibility — and therefore on the transmigratory instinct. (Of theorists of the 1850s, it is Dobell who most explicitly confronts this question of the aesthetic subject's self-transformation in art.)

again as with Geraint, something adolescently solipsistic, self-inflating and intolerant of opposition. For instance, the representations Elaine creates — her embroidery but also her stories — "add ... of her wit", expressing an unobjectionably poetic imaginative autonomy of the object of representation. Similarly, they submerge and excite the self in an emotive projection and identification with "hidden meaning[s]" and "pretty histor[ies]" which derive from fragmentary signs of that object's experience.[36] However, in Elaine, these representations also express imaginative disconnection with the world of the real, a denial of the validity of any relation which gives less freedom and prestige than her "fantasy" of being a "sacred" knight's beloved. Not only do her representations tend to become unfounded ("this cut is fresh;/That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle" — the "conjecture" progressively less plausible), but she has become like the neurotic speaker of "The Palace of Art", at once refusing all contact except with the products of her own imagination and "bar[ring]" others from participation in her world of art.

The rest of the poem develops this crisis as the counterpart of Merlin's historicism and Vivien's commercialism. Rather than being a phase of development, it is revealed as a psycho-discursive response to the twin precipitants of the anxiety of surveillance in Camelot, desire to impress the subject of discipline and mistrust of that

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[36]Compare de Vere on "poetic versatility" — the intuition and representation of the other's interiority — as deriving from the poet's capacity to use his own experience "analogically". "Tennyson's *Princess*", op. cit., 404.

subject's hermeneutic acumen. On the face of it, it should be stressed, the poem shows Elaine to be someone like Merlin, not apt to suffer crises of self-validation merely because people are watching her. Within the bosom of the family, Elaine's self-actualisation has always received encouragement: she has always "ha[d her] will"; she has always been the object of half-serious glorification (when she dreams of the "diamond", for instance, her family imagine it "set in this damsel's golden hair"). Consequently, unlike Enid, she "flushe[s] slightly", no more, when she is talked about before one of the Round Table. Similarly, she has the self-confidence to articulate passion before that body, individually and collectively, even before the King, and does not cringe at the prospect of universal insult. However, again like Merlin, and despite her distance from the institution itself, Elaine's psyche is in fact structured by the desire to loom large under surveillance and therefore disquieted by the question of surveillance's interpretative competence. One of the two childhood images to which she returns on her deathbed — one which, in other words, recalls a founding impulse of her subjectivity — is to find and enter "the palace of the King": to leave the stage of the family for the place where scrutiny is most intense and continuous. This is the wish which has resonated throughout her relationship with Lancelot. She "dreams [her] knight the greatest knight of all" long before knowing who he is, ecstatically observing the "scarf" which publishes her attachment (LE, 370-75; 800-5). She conflates being "Not all unhappy, having loved God's best/And greatest" with "my *glory* to have loved/One peerless, without stain" (LE, 1083 - 7; emphases added). She is, in other words, as riveted by "Fame" — for the Arthurian female, association with a man deemed superlative by the court and populace — as Vivien and the singer who

inspired Merlin. Moreover, like both Merlin and Vivien, Elaine not only desires the subject of surveillance, but observes its inconsistencies and responds to them with an agonistic and not thoroughly convinced differentiation of her own normative expression of normative interiority. Beginning with her immediate peers, she concludes that Torre and Lavaine "when often they have talked of love,/ ... talked/ ... of what they knew not". Catechized about this crucial Arthurian emotion, she "rebel[liously]" quizzes her examiner's standards with a discourse which is both defensive and a more exactingly "simple" and self-giving one than his (LE, 667 - 74). Similarly, correcting for a Gawaine "faithless in the quest", it seems wiser to act on Lancelot's use of her "token" than listen to caution (her father's hint, "And sure I think this fruit is hung to high/For any mouth to gape for save a queen's") (LE, 753 - 773). Yet to do so triggers massive subconscious disquiet: her own heart murmurs, "Being so very wilful you must die" (LE, 775 - 8).

How is this desire and mistrust of the subject of surveillance related to the isolating, self-projecting and hyper-active artistic production represented at the beginning of the poem? To ask this question is also to ask why Elaine falls obsessively and self-immolatingly in love with Lancelot. The latter relationship, after all, is predicated on precisely the same empathetic intensity in interpretative practice and precisely the same uncompromising insistence on the self-sufficiency, value and truth of the imagined world as the former. Elaine's love, like the lyric she "make[s] and sing[s]", is defined in laudatory terms, identifying her hermeneutic and expressive practice with that of the "painter" who, "poring on a face ...

Divinely through all hindrance finds the man

Behind it, and so paints him that his face,

The shape and colour of a mind and life,

Lives ... ever at its best

And fullest. (LE, 330 - 35)

In fact, both Elaine's artistic and her erotic mode react to an intensification of the anxiety of surveillance suffered by no other figure in the 1859 *Idylls*. Apart from her desire to enter Camelot, the other childhood image to which returns at the end of her life is that of the "dumb old servitor". It is he, no one else, who must propel her on the journey which fulfils the wish to illuminate Camelot (LE, 1120). This servitor is the gruesome family reminder of what happens without Camelot's society of illustriousness: the "dull days" of self-concealment, torture and death which, from Lord Astolat's story, would be among Elaine's earliest memories (LE, 270 - 9). That only he is an appropriate companion for her funeral bier suggests that Elaine's refugee childhood has left her traumatized: fixated on images of a distant Camelot which provides more safety than home, and with a buried apprehension of the consequences of being revealed outside home. In other words, rather than being simply the pattern of commitment or non-commitment to Arthur, the contradictory relation to his surveillance is a foundation for her whole pysche. She has a profound need for contact with a Round Table whose virtue can protect her from enslavement, mutilation and murder. Conversely, uncertainty about the subject of surveillance, any suggestion that this subject is unreal or excludes her, has threatening nervous potential. This potential is only increased because contact with Camelot itself necessarily

involves exposure to an eye which is not the family's. As a result, it is essential for Elaine to establish a situation which at once gives her imaginative assurance that she is welcomed by the subject of surveillance and some input to that subject which allows her to confirm and refine its protective normality. It is for this reason that she loves Lancelot with impetuousness, joy and desperation, and also pours herself into idealising and solipsistic representations of him and of the love she feels. Both activities articulate and attempt to repair dependence on the relation to surveillance, instituting social relationships which take Elaine from the family and bring her into the bosom of a kindly Round Table. Both also establish transactional and hermeneutic/expressive characteristics which permit imaginative affirmation in the face of uncertainty about the subject of surveillance. It is these patterns for which the poetry of sympathetic projection gives Tennyson a model.

At the most practical level, Elaine's family circumstances mean that she has no option but to relate to the Round Table via the discursive mode of the poet of sympathy. Living far from Camelot, she must risk the "painter['s]" hermeneutic gambit if she is in any way to enrich and bolster the images which found her security. She has to project "the shape and colour of a mind and life/ ... at [its] best/And fullest" to compensate for lacking the information available at Court. More important, however, is the way the mode of the poet of sympathy resonates in all the relationships in which Elaine is vulnerable. First, it generates a knowledge of the object's being which can be both relied upon and which dismisses any ground but that of the object's imbrication with the subject's intuition. This means that Elaine's

image of the Arthurian subject need depend only on herself, not on the knowledge Camelot's or her family's untrustworthy subjects provide. Second, it guarantees that, in observing the act of expression, the subject of surveillance must take note at once of the association of the subject and object and of the worth pertaining to both. Thus, when Elaine represents her image of virtue to the Round Table, the very act of representation confirms Camelot's enfolding of Elaine and its reality as a practising system of value. Finally, it allows her to negotiate the anxiety of exposure even as it is stirred up. Because they are sympathetic projections, Elaine's love and artistry express a knowledge of the Arthurian subject in which the subject of surveillance becomes an aspect of her own interiority. As such, to differentiate and promote herself as Lancelot's lover and poet is in some sense only to reveal herself before herself, not to venture outside the safety of home.

The whole course of Elaine's relations to Camelot act out this pattern, at first in the mode of joyful risk, latterly — unable to resolve the epistemology of Lancelot's own love — in the mode of desperate assertion. Sympathetic projection motivates the eruptions of reparative activity in which she disassociates herself from dubious assessments of normality while feelingly, self-consciously and "wilfully" acting out her own, nobler alternatives. In particular, it is the motor for the psychological excess with which Elaine greets her fleeting contact with the Round Table — both the precipitate ardour and the suicide. For instance, when she "lifts her eyes" and "love[s]" Lancelot's hermeneutically abundant face, she has just "heard her name ... tost about" and suffered "slight disparagement/Before the stranger". Lancelot's

mellifluous, richly moralising and hyperbolic correction of that judgement has signalled to Elaine that there abides in him an alternative to the resentment, puppyishness and "jest" with which her family treat relation to the shielding subjects of Camelot. The self-protecting, self-projective and self-opening sensibility of the poet of sympathy leaps across this divide, cognitively elaborating the new counterpart to its own values, promoting truth in a representation of the subject's relation with the object. "Rapt upon his face as if it were a God's", Elaine repeatedly "read[s Lancelot's] lineaments", fastening onto the Arthurian virtues her intuitive power construes in his face and manner as if to a reality. At the same time, this image incarnates states of *feeling* which are her own, so that she believes his "sudden-beaming tenderness" is "pure" and "all for her", and draws peace of mind from the image of him and the imagined relation which now connects her with the Round Table. Finally, to confirm the new feeling, to realise her inclusion under a finer surveillance than has hitherto been her lot, she gives its symbol expression: in the private, aesthetic image of Lancelot "speaking in the silence", and, prompted by "wild desire", in the public "token" of "her favour at the jousts". Throughout the time Lancelot's actions give no lie to her wishes she continues thus: composing empathetic art and acting out the role of "gentle maiden" in a bid to underline the reality of her insight and her direction by a more exacting subject than exists at home.

What happens, however, when Lancelot betrays traits which lie outside Elaine's self-guaranteeing image of him? It appears that, because of the nervously critical nature of her investment, the mode of sympathetic projection means Elaine

must fatally repeat and intensify her involvement in the image. Faced with the tenuousness of her discursive contact with Camelot but unable to dispense with its catharsis of the anxiety of surveillance, she cannot abandon Lancelot, only give his image even more virulence, adding to its meaning all the echoes of destruction hitherto kept at bay and making ever more desperate attempts to be recognized. The first consequence of this is the "little helpless innocent" repetition, in the form of a dilemma, of the compulsive structure of her anxiety. "Him or death", she "mutters", playing out a buried notion that, if the "wild desire" to be publicly associated with the prime Arthurian subject is not fulfilled, she has exposed herself ("wilful[ly]") and "must die" (LE, 887 - 98). The second consequence is a repeated effort by the poet of sympathy to deflect the depersonalising anguish of exclusion and repair the realisation that Arthur's best subjects are insufficiently reliable to appease the spectre of the "heathen". This means getting acknowledged images of her relation with Lancelot which incorporate its paradoxical investments but also neutralize them by existing as hyperbolic and challenging statements of Arthurian norms. Elaine begins with a despairing offer to stay close to the ideal Arthurian subject, the terms of which fly in the face of Camelot's less fine-hearted representatives: she will "be with you still, ... see your face,/ ... serve you, and follow you through the world". Lancelot, however, reveals that his actions are governed by the "ear and eye [and] ... stupid heart" of these unsatisfactory subjects of surveillance, and offers in return only a conventional hyperbole (LE, 943 -58). Consequently, Elaine turns to the aesthetic production which has always accompanied the social performance of her subjectivity. First, she composes a song which compacts and objectifies the compulsive structure of her

dilemma of "Love and Death", and with whose projective merging of subject and object she now pathologically identifies.[37]

> I fain would follow love, if that could be;
> I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
> Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.

However, merely to "die", as "the owls/Wailing", the "sallow-rifted glooms" and "the moanings of the wind" require her to (LE, 993 - 6), does not satisfy the neurotic structure in its totality. It leaves Elaine isolated in the imaginative space of exclusion both from family and the Round Table. As such, she embarks on a second retributive composition, whose imagined reception "after ... long voyage" brings "rest" (LE, 1045 - 54). This composition, the funeral bier, is one of far greater complexity and self-possession than the former. With its centrepiece her corpse and "the little bed on which I died for Lancelot's love", Elaine is also, pointedly, to be accoutred "like the Queen .../For richness", with the addition of an emblem of purity and a "loyal" war-victim "Winking his eyes and twisted all his face" (LE, 1110 - 21; 1138). Moreover, the icon will carry a caption which, pitiable in the self-effacement of its requests for Elaine (she asks for the stock Christian rites as if they were great favours), nonetheless

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[37]Compare De Vere's description of lyric: "The passion expressed is unconscious of itself: it is borne by a happy instinct at once to its object: it sinks into that object and loses itself". "Edwin the Fair", op. cit., 352. Elaine makes a "song" out of her death wish in days when "the owls/Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt/Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms/Of evening, and the moanings of the wind" (LE, 992-6).

punctiliously draws attention to Lancelot's apparent cruelty and reminds him of his role as "knight peerless". It is thus at once an icon of Elaine's passionate knowledge of Camelot's "greatest knight", an icon of Camelot's inability to include all who believe in it, and a punitive judgement on a Lancelot and a court which, despite her protestation, Elaine at some level knows lives scandalously. As a catharsis for neurosis, the multiform structure also fulfils Elaine's need for ratification under the subject of Arthurian surveillance, contributes to that subject's normalising project through a corrective restatement of its standards, and obeys the command that to leave home is "death".

In the Lancelot whose link between interiority and expression leaves Elaine entrapped and deranged, Tennyson tackles another fundamental question of discipline. Lancelot becomes the perfect knight because, like Elaine, he is prompted by a traumatic childhood relation to surveillance — in his case a fostering which renders him exquisitely responsive to each element in Camelot's triangular system. However, this sensitivity is also seen as the counterpart of a fantasizing passivity about the subject of surveillance, one which makes the several activities comprising the internalisation of Arthurian law mutually disruptive. This is more than a critique of one individual — a question of Lancelot's personal inability to commit himself to a hierarchizing of the Round Table's converging demands. It is Lancelot's dependence which energizes that "force ... grace and versatility" which make him the acme of chivalry. As such, his predicament suggests that the internalisation supported by discipline creates subjects who, in their roots, are dangerously liable to a mere puppet-

like attachment to discipline's avatars. The perfect product of the society of indirect surveillance may not be a subject who sees, intuits and chooses the law from its own moral autonomy, but one without a moral centre and at the mercy of each one of the law's institutional peculiarities. In Lancelot, this situation is redeemed in a projection — albeit only one anticipated in the poem's last line — of the slowly accumulating effect of crises of self-examination provoked in him by adventitious and spectacular displays of the law. He dies "a holy man" because his psyche is eventually blasted clean and simplified by the stress of surveillance generated by episodes like that with Elaine (where he witnesses the devastating symbol of Camelot's compromise as an institution, must explain his unwitting part in that symbol and undergo sympathy from the man who is at once his hero and his wittol). With Lancelot, these situations are played out not merely in ethical terms, but as a movement through a series of subject positions in which he generates discourse before a normalising audience. This representation allows Tennyson to continue his imbricated critique of the socializing role of poetry and the socializing technique of discipline.

Lancelot's first appearance in the 1859 text immediately establishes a character in whom issues of ethics, discourse, apathy and the multiplication of disciplinary demands are intertwined. "Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen", he "speak[s] against the truth" — and his King — satisfying what he assumes to be Guinevere's judgement upon his self-normalisation but abandoning his own (LE, 83 - 94). In quick succession thereafter a series of verbal and social exchanges represent the inextricable impeccancy and conflict of Lancelot in terms of the adjoining subject

positions and modes of self-revelation of the poetry of modern idyll and the poetry of epic. Even as his choices reveal moral evasion, the text insists that this practice makes Lancelot everything Camelot strains to be: "the chief of knights", "the darling of the court" (LE, 140, 186, 260). He is so because the two elements of his discursive self-actualisation personify the "noble talk" which, in Arthur's regime, dialogically embodies surveillance. The first of these elements exemplifies a style whose rhetorical flavour Vivien mimics, which Gawaine adopts as arrogant wile and which Geraint fumbles. It is one of the styles of the diffuse surveillance provided by everyday conversation, and *the* style of the more concentrated surveillance provided by romantic relationship. Along with his first dialogue with the Astolats (LE, 222 - 40), Lancelot's exchanges with Guinevere (LE, 97 - 157, 1170 - 224) intimate that this should be a normalising language self-conscious about its subject's social relations and its object's moral psychology, and concerned to recreate both in an idealising representation.[38] It is a form of words which is rhetorically dense, appealing continually and elaborately to natural analogies[39], moving in leisurely, concentrated and highly considered grammatical patterns.[40] At the same time, it is both curious and

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[38] One of Christopher Ricks's complaints about the *Idylls* is that Tennyson finds no discursive equivalent for the social reality of Camelot (Ricks, op. cit., 256).

[39] e.g. "Then of the crowd ye took no more account/Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,/When its own voice clings to each blade of grass/And every voice is nothing" (LE, 106 - 8).

[40] e.g. "Queen,/Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,/Take, what I had not won except for you,/These jewels" (LE, 1172 - 5).

"kindly"[41], constantly broaching and re-visiting actions in their widest ethical and transactional contexts[42], but tending also to transform the everyday moments it refers to into hyperbolically significant enactments.[43] As such, its overall effect is to render experience something ambrosially unhurried, replete, socially alert and exalting. The features and mood of this language simultaneously recall those conservative poetics wished to establish as the only legitimate ones in poetry, some of Tennyson's own poems,[44] and Edyrn's description of the court dispensing normalising discourse without the intervention of "scorn" or accusation. Conjoined with it in Lancelot's language is a style which complements the former in the surveillance of everyday conversation, and which functions as the sole style for the surveillance constituted in state discourse. Emerging elsewhere only in Arthur's public pronouncements, it is

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[41]Geraint's largesse is an inarticulate echo of this.

[42]The series of remarks about Arthur exemplify this: "else/Rapt in this fancy of the Table Round/And swearing men to vows impossible,/To make them like himself" (LE, l 128-131); "And with what face ... /Shall I appear ... /Before a King who honours his own word,/As if it were his God's?" (LE, l 141-4); "Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,/No keener hunter after glory breathes./He loves it in his knights more than himself:/They prove to him his work" (LE, l 149-152).

[43]"So ye will *grace* me ... / ... with your fellowship/O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself" (LE, l 222-4, emphases added); Guinevere's re-directing of Geraint's quest (MG, 225 - 31).

[44]John Wilson's good words about the "Ode To Memory" and Aubrey deVere's discussion of the place of truth in poetry and of poetry's romantic world are good examples of this. "Audley Court" and "The Golden Year" similarly combine atmospheres of leisure, social awareness and figurative-sensuous allure.

intimated in Lancelot's second dialogue with the Asolats, subsequent exchanges with Lavaine and his account before the gathered court of Elaine's love. This mode of discourse gives the subject a mimetic rather than expressive function, privileges personal witness[45], entails a fair but severe and non-adjustable measurement of normality,[46] and issues in the non-figurative representation of events and a concise, relatively unconsidered movement.[47] Its effect is to concentrate experience much more firmly on the self and its inadequacies, rendering consciousness as something scrupulous, bracing, uncompromising and awe-struck. Merging in the poem with epic tropes of the roll-call of battles and the poem's adoption of the epic archaicism of the Malory source text, it both recalls the concerns of historiography and is what happens when discourse evokes Camelot's origin of surveillance, the "vow impossible" to model judgement on that of the King himself.[48] In other words, as a discursive ensemble, Lancelot's "manners" deploy all of the powers and open all of the

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[45]E.g. "And on the mount/Of Badon I myself beheld the King/ ... /And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,/'They are broken, they are broken!'" (LE, L 801-9); "To this I call my friends in testimony,/Her brethren, and her father" (LE, L 1279-82).

[46]E.g. "I never saw his like: there lives/No greater leader" (LE, L 315-6); "in me there dwells/No greatness, save it be some far off touch/Of greatness to know well I am not great" (LE, L 447-9); "Know that for this most gentle maiden's death/Right heavy am I, for good she was and true" (LE, L 1282-3).

[47]LE, 309 - 16 gives a good example of this. Lancelot speaks with headlong, awestruck conviction, with none of the grammatic control he shows in his exchanges with Guinevere.

[48]All the occasions on which Lancelot uses this mode involve the memory, immediate prospect or prescence of performing under the King's gaze (LE, 305 - 309; 443 - 451; 1280 - 1313).

epistemological and expressive typologies which the Arthurian subject evokes in *Idylls of the King*. He combines the classic mode of effectiveness of conservative poetry with the classic judicial stricture of historiography, advancing each as one of the essential facets in surveillance's technique.

Why then, given his superlative performance as the subject of Arthurian discourse, does Lancelot fail in his role as the subject of Arthurian normalisation? For Tennyson, this question turns on two possibilities: the de-coupling of the two subject-positions which comprise the ideal expressivity of the Arthurian subject, and moral paralysis in the object of surveillance. The text makes clear that, whatever his general self-assurance, command and integrity, Lancelot's central consciousness is of two "battl[ing]" relations where he is in a position of service: "the love he bare his Lord" and "the love he bare the Queen". These relationships are the context for the two divergent discourses described above — indeed generating the most extravagant gestures of each (the presentation of the "boon" of the diamonds, the strict self-critique of the exchanges with Lavaine). Tellingly, the text suggests that the servitude in these relations is not a matter of personal choice, but a product of the subjectivity induced in Lancelot by the imagined or actual look of the object of love. In other words, Lancelot's commitment and his discourse are shown as stemming from a very specific, unusually inspiring variety of the anxiety of surveillance. It is the "image of [the Queen's] face" which draws him back from the "holy vows" of his sickness, filling his "heart" with a "treacherous peace" that "shackles" his "will" to hers. It is her gaze "dwel[ling] languidly on him" that prompts his lie to Arthur. Similarly, the

memory of the King "seeing me" recalls Lancelot to the hero-worship in which he sees the "fire of God" in Arthur and feels that there is "no greater leader". Likewise, it is directing Lavaine toward the whole iconic presence of "the man" himself, before whom they will fight, that brings out his deep sense of secondariness ("in me there dwells/No greatness"). In each of these instances, the experience of surveillance is seen to have a discursive, psychological and ethical effect which bypasses the subject's powers of choice. As representations of the way Lancelot responds to the two most important relationships in his vows, they suggest that he is the "greatest knight" because his "love" for the subject of surveillance leaves him no choice but the total internalisation of the norms represented in each of the gazes the vows bind him to. At the same time, they establish that this extreme responsiveness entails a debility which cripples normalisation if the two gazes ever demand incompatible practices. The subject can neither refuse response nor place response in any order of importance: he can only carry out the subject of surveillance's behests, to the nth degree, rendering questionable the whole circuit of internalisation and demonstration of which he is a part.

Lancelot does not end in this debility, for his character figures a third psycho-discursive practice, one which conditions and eventually suppresses the others. While deriving from the structures of personality required in the object of discipline, consideration of this practice deepens the scepticism the figure of Lancelot carries about surveillance's capacity to make those structures of personality effective. The practice is associated with Elaine's. It draws heavily on the self's imaginative

autonomy; ultimately causes Lancelot's negation as a live Arthurian subject; and springs from a childhood trauma which gives neurotic intensity to the relations upon which Arthurian surveillance depends. It is announced in the "solitary ... fancy" (LE, 162 - 3) wherein Lancelot "los[es]" himself on the "downs". There, cognitive autonomy opens on a sporadic and unavailing struggle against the apathy of surveillance:

> often in him
> His mood was like a fiend, and rose
> And drove him into wastes and solitudes
> Who was yet a living soul. (LE, 249 - 52)

Confronted by the demonstrable contradictions which flow from his impulses to become impeccable, Lancelot is in other words compelled into a soliloquizing and projective discourse of self-motivation which does not translate into effective Arthurianism. The structure which underlies this sensitivity emerges at the end of the poem when, battered by an intense disciplinary sequence, Lancelot explores the paradoxical terms of "remorseful pain".[49] There, he gnaws over a space of responsibility conferred by the vows and his appearance as history, but which he

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[49]First plunged by thwarted love for the subject of surveillance into "half disgust/At love, life, all things" (LE, 1230 - 1; '1859 text), he witnesses Elaine's poetic, hyper-normalised, fruitless devotion; acts out the uncompromising subject position of Arthurian epic; and spars self-protectively with Arthur over the definition of values.

cannot account for in the experience he projects as the foundation of his personality.

> Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
> Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
> Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
> Stole from his mother — so the story runs —
> She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
> Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
> She kissed me saying, "Thou art fair, my child,
> As a King's son,", and often in her arms
> She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
>
> (LE, 1392 - 1401; 1859 text)

Half recalling, half inventing an origin for the structure of satisfaction he has thus far acted out, Lancelot attributes his emotional longings to a fatherless and motherless childhood — one where he is environed by suggestive and powerful female artistry, dubbed at once "Fair" and "A King's son" by a subject before whom he is helpless, and effortlessly at the centre of legend. Each of these early experiences has been repeated by loving the King and Queen of Camelot, and becoming its "greatest knight". Yet the "name" which is the fruit of his past's *desire* — the status as object of history which he has had to "f[i]ght for" himself — adds to this desire a moral autonomy which now cannot brook the damage of passivity:

> what use in it?
> To make men worse by making my sin known?

Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?

... I needs must break

These bonds that so defame me (LE, 1405 - 10)

What is suggested, in other words, is that the interlocking activities in which the subject reacts to converging networks of surveillance breed the freedom of choice which weans him off surveillance. Yet in the figure of Lancelot, the "remorseful", conscionable soliloquizing which acted as the prelude to Edyrn's reform does not lead to a self-originating re-commitment to Arthurian subjecthood. On the contrary, Lancelot himself acknowledges that he cannot "break these bonds ... without/She wills it" (LE, 1410 - 1) — namely, without feeling himself objectified and directed by surveillance. Even more damagingly, what the text projects as Lancelot's reform does not permit freedom either, only a withdrawal into the privacy of the "hermit" (Lancelot dies a "holy man") — or into mode of poetic projection as self-enclosed and self-absorbed as the early Enid's or Elaine's: "May God/ ... /seize me by the hair and bear me far,/And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,/Among the fragments of the hills" (LE, 1412 - 16). The ideal subject *is* redeemed, but can never go beyond the bounds of a disciplining institutional confinement, or express redemption other than in the uncommunicated imagination of supernatural and scenically allusive punishment.

Guinevere

The final poem of the 1859 sequence breaks with the others in concentrating its action within the walls of a quasi-disciplinary institution which complements but lies outside the project of the Round Table; and also by examining the figure of surveillance's unsurveyed surveyor. Camelot is re-situated as drawing on two contrasting relations of surveillance, whose respective anxieties in the object of surveillance cannot be conflated. One of these is the familiar narrativization of value judgements carried out by the impersonal subjects of court and oral history. While an effective source of fear, this is shown to provide no medium through which the object of surveillance can learn to escape anxiety, no guidance for the internalisation of norms. The other is a much more deeply individualized encounter within a forgiving but enclosed space, where the object is brought into direct contact with its overseer to hear the overseer's lyrical self-exposition. Transferred from Guinevere's court to a religious retreat, this version of surveillance is shown to depend heavily on the integrity of a figure whose self-normalisation goes on wholly outside the circuits of the institution. In other words, the poem revisits and crystallizes the identification of the success of surveillance with a poeticizing discursive structure and its failure with a historicizing one, while noting the wholly chancy and unpredictable nature of surveillance's success.

This crystallisation begins in the figure of Guinevere. Her disciplining gathers together the threads of *Idylls*' critique of surveillance as a mode of power. Like the

male protagonists of the first three poems. Guinevere embodies much that, for Arthurian discipline, is normal, but the reasons for her splendour are from the beginning also reasons for uncertainty. When we first see her in "Enid", and then with much greater ethical elaboration in "Elaine", Guinevere's state and influence as a dispenser of inspiring judgement are intertwined with internal distance from Camelot's usual centres of authority. Her words and glamour send knights off to glorious deeds, yet in her own relation to the subject of surveillance she is uniformly dismissive. It is not only that she rates Arthur as an obtuse, uncrafty, chimerical and distracted eye. It is that, unlike Vivien, she betrays no animus in at once flouting and fascinating the "Court", only a sense that their greedy observation is an obstacle — whether to "our dream" or her dignity as "Arthur's Queen". At first, in other words, her desire and expressiveness is represented as if they originated in relations of sex and power whose determinations are more existential than institutional. Even her later acknowledgement of Arthur's superiority is not a reaction to the work of surveillance, only a defensive provocation designed to wound a man who has wounded her. In "Guinevere" all this changes. The initiating structures of Guinevere's personality, their relation to her practice as an Arthurian and alteration to both are imbricated with the disciplinary institution. Brought up at the very apex of power, her main driver is what she later calls "*false voluptuous* pride" (emphases added). This, it turns out, is a determination not to be satisfied with less than stewardship over the most cultivated and prestigious environment her world can supply. Her desire, in other words, is to be the dispensing subject of surveillance, not its object. Thus it is that, along with the serviceable complimentarity of the King's guardianship and the spring, the company

of Lancelot (his conversation, his physical allure, his reputation) makes her first journey to Camelot at once an ideal and no more than her due. Thus it is that she projects herself into this experience ("sheets of hyacinth/That seemed the heavens upbreaking through the earth") and into Camelot's idyllic-romantic mode of expression as her medium of domination: "those bounds of courtesy in which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule". Thus it is also that she reacts against Arthur. It is not only that his discourse of historic-epic focus challenges the aesthetic and sexual terms of her investment ("she thought him cold,/High, self-contained and passionless"): it is that this discourse proffers a subject position which demolishes her dream of pride. In particular, it induces an intensely physically sense of stress related to the "light" it throws on her as subject ("I thought I could not breathe in that fine air/That pure severity of perfect light"). That is to say, from being the subject of surveillance, Arthur's mode of expression causes her to experience objectification, and the fear of failure before discipline's norms. It is to protect herself from this threat to her structure of feeling that Guinevere elaborates the sophisticate "half-despi[t]e" for the King which is represented in "Elaine". The attitude allows her to maintain both her preferred lifestyle and her preferred relation to surveillance: making Arthur's strict, simple measure the object of the valuation of her more moderate personification of his own institution's gaze.

The trials which reform Guinevere's anxieties and investments take off from this pride, linking and concentrating those which transform Lancelot and Geraint. Initial agitation at failure connects with the thought of historical reputation and

complicity in the historical process. Decisive inner change occurs when the powerless subject virtually overhears an elegiac-romantic lyric of forgiveness from an object of surveillance it has personally wronged. The process begins with an unsolicited intimation that the court's forces of surveillance will not leave Guinevere unobjectified; and that their interlocked circuits can affect what sustains her "pride". "The Powers that tend the Soul" approach her only after she has "shudder[ed]" at the anticipation that the King's nephew will "track her guilt" till "hers/Would be for evermore a name of scorn" (G, 59 - 60). As we have already seen, consciousness of prominence I the roll-call of those who will make up Britain's history — attachment to her royal status — has formed a constant in Guinevere's personality. Thus it is that conviction of what she later calls "that defeat of fame" sparks "vague spiritual fear", insomnia and self-doubt. The next stage is burgeoning awareness of a symbolic and perhaps causal association between the failure of her marriage and the historical ravaging of the Kingdom. Dreaming of her shadow "swallow[ing] all the land, and in it/Far cities burn[ing]", she poses the question of repentance, but like Lancelot without any belief that transformation is possible or certainty about how it can be assured. This state of agonizing moral suspension remains even when she retreats to the institution which foreruns that of disciplinary confinement, the "nunnery". Consumed by project "hate" from "the people and the King", and fear that, "lured by the crimes and frailties of the court", the heathen "begin to slay the folk and destroy the land", she internalises the gaze of history so that even stories she has herself solicited appear the expression of a harsh external monitor ("Lo, they have set her on./Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns"). Yet, still struggling to avoid

objectification , disguising her "name" to negotiate a private space for repentance, she has no faith in that repentance ("for surely I repent" etc.). The suggestion is that the eye of the historiographical discourse in Camelot, both that comprised by personal historical analysis and that comprised by the collective adjudication of repute, is unable to engender whole-hearted commitment. It can neither bestow the "grace" that allows the self to engineer its own change nor bring about the unreserved opening of the self to the subject of surveillance that is the key to normalisation. It is at once too harsh and too distant (and therefore, paradoxically, dependent an a solipsistic kind of projective poetic vision such as Geraint, Enid, Vivien and Elaine are all damaged by). Something more intimate, probing and generous is required. This comes in the form of a King's word which Guinevere will only allow herself to hear, not see, and which therefore has the character of a dramatic monologue rather than of a rhetorically adjusted exchange. That is, it is in the same relationship of poetic interpretation as Geraint hearing Enid's declaration of love that Guinevere encounters a subject of surveillance who can finally move her.

What emerges from this encounter, however, is paradoxical. Arthur's love lyric releases three psycho-discursive commitments in Guinevere, all signalling her internalisation of Arthur's law, all abandoning his socio-political project itself. First, she launches an overheard "passionate utterance" of her own, stepping through the obligatory suicidal phase of the failed Arthurian subject to the "hope" of recovery. This "hope", however, rejects all the regimes of surveillance on which Camelot was built, intimating in their place a quite different transcendental and institutional

sanction for normalisation. Guinevere turns from the "defeat of fame", and from the sting of her King's and her lover's prospective or actual judgement. In their stead she adopts a vision of herself which, though its condition is experienced as the King's gift, is in fact a release from his measurements. She re-constitutes herself before the gaze of "*my* God" [emphases added]: an eye which Arthur defers to and which is defined as much by the "nunnery" as by Arthur's aspiration. Second, Guinevere engages in confessional utterance, committing herself to objectification by the gaze she has just declared allegiance to and committing herself to confinement by the non-Arthurian institution which pursues that gaze. Avowing her apparent historical reputation before the nuns, craving admittance to their walls, she renders superfluous the guard Arthur places on her, substituting for his project of extending surveillance throughout social space the project of its concentration in religious retreat. Finally, Guinevere promises a continuous, anti Arthurian purgative utterance. She affirms a psycho-discursive intent which denies both the idyllically "voluptuous" and "joy[ful]" elements of Arthurian subjectivity and its historico-epic "fire for fame": a life of "almsdeed", "prayer" and "grief". Once again, she re-orients the normality of the Arthurian subject away from Camelot's goal of a pure but secular and glorious judiciary toward that of pious, ascetic humility and obscurity, a life that culminates in absolute withdrawal from the mensurative "voices" it is the Round Table's task to mould.

What are the characteristics of the discourse which breaks down Guinevere's pride; and what is the implication of Guinevere's appeal to a space beyond Arthurian institution — indeed beyond poetry and history. To pose these questions is in fact to

ask what comprises the psycho-discursive practice personified by Arthur himself. When Guinevere simultaneously prises herself free of the fear of surveillance and of Arthur's instantiation of it, she in fact does no more than repeat a movement which is structural to Arthur's position at the apex of Camelot's disciplinary regime. What she does thus draws attention to the critique of the society of surveillance embodied in that society's "Head". In Arthur, Tennyson presents a figure who personifies the normalised self required by the institution of surveillance. As the origin of the institution, however, his position throws its efficacy into doubt, for he is not himself its product. Though he participates in the mechanism, both as subject and object, he does not take his motives for self-normalisation from it, nor see in its judgements upon him a source of inspiration or worry concerning himself. If, as Guinevere suggests, the goal of the Round Table is to make subjects "like himself" this highlights a profound enigma in the whole machinery of discipline. Throughout *Idylls* Tennyson has traced ethical and psychological instability to the epistemological and expressive anxieties of the subject and object positions of the regime of surveillance. In the figures of Geraint, Enid, Merlin, Vivien, Lancelot, Elaine and Guinevere, he has represented the successes and failures of the institution in terms of its capacity to precipitate crises of normalisation which render the deepest structures of personality. Now he suggests not merely that the goal of discipline is a subject who does not require the immediate presence of a regime of surveillance, but that its goal is a subject whose deepest formation slips the moorings of the relationships of surveillance. In Arthur, this critique has another consequence. It is not merely that, unlike Lancelot and Guinevere, he is never structured by the relations of surveillance.

It is that, in the act of self-normalisation he carries out when under the greatest temptation to ignore his own standards, he succeeds only by drawing on an epistemological practice whose forms contradict those of disciplinary knowledge. This representation is particularly problematic for the kinds of surveillance and varieties of disciplinary knowledge which have been the focus of the poem as a whole. Arthur shifts to a religiously inspired, existential vision of the object of knowledge, in which the subject at once abandons its position as the arbiter of the object's value and removes the construction of norms from the evolving, collective circuit of representation. At one stroke, Tennyson thus suggests that the epistemological structure which underlies discipline, historiography and poetics fails to normalise the subject; that its construction of the other as an object of knowledge contradicts the construction that is required if the other is to be an object of power; and that the model of expression which sees the mutual surveillance of individual and collective as the origin of progressive value is misguided. Not only I Arthur's ideal subjectivity structured outside the relations of surveillance, in other words, but his decisive practice shifts the sources of normalisation from those relations.

The first critical factor in Tennyson's representation of Arthur is his relationship to the subject of surveillance. As Guinevere's threatened to be, Arthur's is a subjectivity which does not suffer anxiety or desire either about its role as the subject of Camelot's circuits of observation and judgement, or about its objectification by them. It is not that Arthur has no consciousness of these relations, or that he has no emotions or intentions regarding what happens in them. It is simply that he is

singularly without the kinds of defensive and nervously inspired epistemological or expressive distortion that we have seen plague every other character where they are concerned. This partly stems from his role as the origin both of Camelot's surveillance and the norms which it enforces. Though the eyes of Court and crowd are continually on him, it is structurally impossible for his psyche to be patterned by the threat of that appraisal because the vows give him the task of impressing upon all observers a different standard of value from their accustomed one. It is not that Arthur is never seen to adjust his behaviour in relation to the eyes that watch him. On the contrary, before court, tournament, friend or individual knight, Arthur is extremely self-conscious about the way his work and deeds will be interpreted and always pitches them with an eye for the norms the subject of surveillance will read in them. However, he does not do this in anguish at being misvalued, going unnoticed, or failing to meet surveillance's standards, but to make sure his action is an exaggerated and comprehensible example of the priorities and practices of his own standard of value. Thus it is that, at the Diamond Jousts, Arthur makes of every public action a lesson in reward and bureaucratic probity. Thus it is too that Arthur deliberately refuses to explore the "wild things" being said about his "wife and friend", and at the end of the poem does not make what would seem the logical step, having forgiven Guinevere and having acknowledged the intense emptiness he feels without her, of living with her again. However, Arthur's ease in the networks of surveillance cannot be attributed solely to his role as their origin. It is not a matter of maintaining a dominance over the kinds of judgement that are passed. Not only can he "laugh" at petty humiliations in the public shows of "our mock wars", but he can accept and

consider apparent criticism offered by the observers who surround him. The "finger of reproach" he detects in Geraint's "plea" that he be allowed to "defend his marches" inspires no resentment, only a "mus[ing]" acknowledgement that a shortcoming exists. In other words, Arthur uses the judgements of surveillance, without angst, as an aid to his own self-appraisal and self-production. He does not refuse it, as Guinevere wishes to do, but submits himself to the possibility of learning openly from the subject of surveillance, nonetheless standing outside it in the specific sense of evaluating the evaluation and following his own counsel.

It might be suggested, on the above reading, that Arthur is so wholly invested in the technology of surveillance as to be a personality consumed and exhausted by the roles that technology offers. It could be maintained, that is, that he has sunk his identity into the complex disciplinary mechanism of the Round Table because it represent to him historical survival as the founder of a "time". His happiness in its roles would then not derive from psychic independence but from a megalomaniac need to make them work, a megalomaniac need to be the object of a whole Kingdom's regard for centuries to come. Two aspects of Arthur's life, as Tennyson represents them, suggest that this is not so; and that, therefore, the motivation for Arthur's relationship with the subject of surveillance is determined independently of the institution itself. The clearest of these emerges in one of Tennyson's additions to his multitude of sources. While still in his knight-errantry, Arthur's "heart" predicts that his kingship will not be "the fair beginning of a time", but utterly obliterated, "lichened into colour with the rocks", remembered only like a dim legend of

fratricide. The prospect does not deter him, for what drives him to create the Round Table is a "fire of God" which is not concerned for personal fame. Indeed, he symbolically accepts that the civilisational project will end in his own erasure: breaking the "crown" which precipitated his heart's omen; using up its treasures one by one in an institution central to the polity he sees as his duty; wiping out the past as he acknowledges may happen to himself ("the heathen, who some say will rule the land hereafter"). More interesting is Arthur's manifestly intense personal investment in the people who populate the relationships of his polity. The crucial thing here is that, in contrast to every other character in the poem, there is no suggestion that Arthur's passions are, in part, compensatory formations which relate to the subject's uncertainty about surveillance. Arthur's love and admiration for Lancelot and Guinevere are represented as existential givens: awestruck sexual passion for a woman of disturbing beauty and state; warmth and identification with a man who has saved his life in battle and whose "courtesies" excite his sense of possibility. It is not that Arthur does not invest heavily in his polity, or that he does not see Lancelot and Guinevere as essential components in it. It is that his feelings for both are not a product of their place in his political scheme. They are what he "lean[s]" on in carrying out that scheme, but even when, "through" them, that scheme fails, there is no lasting confusion between the agony of the failure of a life's work and the agony of the loss of "wife and friend". Guinevere is forgiven, not "cursed" as the cause of failure;[50] Lancelot is fought, but neither kills the other, and Arthur still recognizes his

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[50] Arthur sees Guinevere as the medium of failure.

"grace of courtesy".

Arthur's psycho-discursive formation corresponds to his nervous independence of surveillance, and is unique among the characters in *Idylls*. While the mode of speech he promulgates in the poems before "Guinevere" is, like that of Merlin, a deliberate corrective for instabilities perceived in the general psycho-discursive practice of the Round Table, Arthur is not personally invested or expressed by this practice. In "Guinevere", on the other hand, we do see the multiform and intense self-actualisation that dominates his inner world — a practice which has hitherto been hidden, which is more structurally complex and problematic than any thus far seen, and which confirms that the decisive impulses of Arthurianism are not reproduced in its disciplinary institutions. The first practice is seen in Arthur's public pronouncements, and his conversations with Geraint, Lancelot, Guinevere and Gawaine. Its features match those of the abstract historiography Victorian historians attempted to surpass, de-emphasizing narrative, or indeed representation, as a means for promulgating values. It is not simply that Tennyson avoids having Arthur explain himself by recounting stories about the past, as Merlin, Enid, Geraint and Elaine do. It is not simply that Arthur only sparingly contributes or gives ear to the general exchange of competing accounts of events — the discursive object Merlin and Vivien are intent on controlling. It is that, where Arthur does allude to a reality outside the situation of utterance, he pares down the depiction of that reality and presents instead its moral analysis, making his discourse authoritative not by the rich flourishes and metaphors of a Lancelot, but by a severe, dialectical designation of values. Thus,

instituting the Diamond Jousts, he recalls not the magical and romantic scene of discovery of the diamonds, but the political and legal rights of treasure-trove. Remarking on Elaine, he does not discuss her story, but what her relationship to Lancelot signifies about love. Using Edyrn to exemplify true Arthurianism, he does not sketch the circumstantial sequence of reform as Edyrn does, but argues about reform's ethical conditions and metaphysical meaning. His courtesy, likewise, is a simple expression of sensitivity, not a hyper-rhetorical game: "Then will ye miss ... Sir Lancelot's prowess in the lists/A sight ye love to look on". All this responds to a pyscho-discursive danger Arthur identifies in "Elaine": "I know my knights fantastical". The plain, didactic but magisterial style sets itself specifically against anxious and over-imaginative competitiveness — what is exemplified in the story of Lancelot's fear that "his name conquers, not him". It functions like the argumentation of Henry Hallam's historical dissertations, damping out the rhetorical as well as chop-logical temptations of sectarian special pleading. Excluding the expressive correlatives of "fancy" and keeping to the philosophic point, it mitigates against the self-projective, self-indulgent excitements of "love of fame" that plague all the other characters, replacing a self-worth based on the comparison of public images of the self with a clinical, unbending self-interrogation. This "cold, high, self-contained and passionless" practice, however, does not define Arthur, although it appears to Guinevere that it does. As Lancelot's comment about "the fire of God" along with the recollections of passion in "Guinevere" suggest, Arthur's identity is based on a great deal more than dialectical authoritarianism. In fact, the psycho-discursive formation which expresses his commitment as a whole consists of a number of disjunct,

interchanging subject positions, comprehending and adding to the discourses the poem has so far considered. This complexity is conveyed in the monologue in "Guinevere".

Arthur's two speeches are dialogically multiform utterances whose transactional terms touch each one of the public, private and internal relations of the Arthurian practice of the self. They are at once self-consciously kingly performances before the watching nuns, attempts to communicate with an object of love and soliloquoies which attempt to restore personal stability. Dramatising transformation in Arthur's consciousness, they instance a full range of hermeneutic and expressive practices, attempting to overcome a fundamental challenge to the King's own capacity to internalise the non-criminality upon which his political project depends. "When first I learned thee hidden here", says Arthur, "wrath forced my thoughts on that fierce law,/The doom of traitors and the flaming death" (G, 534 - 6). This is the challenge Guinevere poses. It is precisely such self-centred violence, the assumption that what the self desires can be made to happen with force, that the "Roman ... law" and "Christ" stand against. It is precisely the inner tendency to that violence (which, as Geraint's predicament shows, may appear to be justified by the forms of the law), that the turning of the self to "high thought" is meant not to sublimate be actually allay. The question for Arthur is, can he not only reign in the overt violence of "wrath", but the inner desire to wound which remains: that is, can he incarnate, not merely impersonate (in his characteristic, dialectic mode) his own vision of the normal, de-criminalized self? The arc of response the speeches describe suggests that, because of

the relation between self and other that they posit, the pyscho-discursive practices available to Arthur are perilously fragile instruments. Both speeches show his consciousness swinging between four objects: the British military and political situation, his personal emptiness and forebodings of "doom", the conflicting love, rage, blame, anguish and "pity" he feels for Guinevere, and a future which must encompass all these experiences. They move from disjointed vituperation, frustration, disgust, isolation and hopelessness about these objects to a barely stabilised, contradictory structure of tenderness, desire, prospective community, determination, self-dramatisation and faith. Both speeches abandon Arthur's customary, dialectical subject position, the first veering between broadly historiographical and projective-empathetic subject positions, the second between romantic-elegiac and religious-apocalyptic positions.

The first suggests that Arthur cannot control his self-obsessive anger. Cast with the elements but not the coherence of a classic historiographical text, it harps on the linking of institutions and personal ethics in socio-political process, but also associates a deeply judgmental consciousness with a self-pitying, cruelly wounding nostalgia for male bonds. It returns time and again to the conditions of the "model" institution, the rippling of "ensample" through social space, and the chaotically disproportionate effect of single disruptions of the model upon national cohesion. It also returns consistently to a hateful and deliberately humiliating representation of Guinevere in comparison to the male collective, utilising a projective consciousness which, as it did for Elaine and Geraint, allows apparently acceptable emotions to carry

aggressive intent: "Thy shadow still would glide from room to room, /And I should evermore by vext with thee/In hanging robe or vacant ornament,/Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair" (G, 501 - 4). What is seen here re-iterates and extends themes present in the first two of the 1859 poems. Able only to conceive of its object as the member of a broad, sociological category and in terms of its stereotypical (not immediate) conditions and consequences, the historiographical gaze merely excuses and intensifies the potential for sentimental aggression of the subject's empathetic gaze. The critique combines elements of Geraint and Merlin. The latter's gaze could not conceive emotional, only factual complexity: its vision of Vivien was represented correlatively as swinging between two empathetic projective extremes — Vivien as incarnation of all Merlin fears or of all he desires. The former's gaze, meanwhile, could not properly evaluate its object because it remained a projection of negative feeling. In both cases, the subject's psycho-discursive practice neither understands the other nor normalises itself. Just so Arthur, who even while maintaining that he loves Guinevere passes on what is technically merciful in terms as hysterically vindictive as Geraint's anger toward Enid or Merlin's designation of Vivien as a "harlot".

Guinevere's touch, and the sounds of war, recall Arthur to an immediacy, and a contact with the other which the historical and projective practices do not compass. This precipitates a vision of Britain, Guinevere, Arthur and the "sin" in which the self abandons the consequences of its judgement on the other, and reacts instead to a felt experience of relationship with the other. This mode does allow Arthur to allay aggression toward Guinevere, while holding up the norms for which he fights, but

only via a new subject position which negates the institutions of surveillance which have been Camelot's essence. Cast as elegy, love-lyric and pious vision, the second speech focuses on personal sexual value, private hopes and an individual experience of religious mystery. Harping on the "last leave of all I love", it struggles to re-represent sexuality, coming destiny, knowledge of betrayal and transgression as elements of a calm and positive mutuality: a joint project of love and service which lays the past to rest. This project, however, cannot be posited in romantic terms alone, only through a particular religious stance toward the other which has no-where been stated as part of the Round Table's structure. Though the lyric stance opens Arthur to an expression of love which allows him to "pity" rather than "curse" Guinevere, its experience — the memory of desire — only re-introduces pain and a humiliating judgement on Guinevere. It returns to a classic disciplinary posture — "weigh[ing]" the object of knowledge against his own "wholly true" interiority — which inflames and hardens the vengefulness which the normal subject must combat: "I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh./And in the flesh though hast sinned; and mine own flesh./Here looking down on thine polluted, cries/'I loathe thee'" (G, 550 - 3). What permits Arthur to move on is a position which abandons even lyric comparison of the other and the self, that of a religious "hope" for his wife's "soul". This consigns judgement to a time which has not come (after their death), to a consciousness which is not his own (God's), and to an object which has not yet made itself available for judgement (the future soul). In this position the self remains in a relationship of knowledge toward the other, even of desire and mutual affect, but the knowledge is not normalising and is no longer coupled to the subject's living out of its own norms.

It is not so much that Arthur suspends judgement, as that his "love" of something apparently full of "sin" can only be resolved by positing its value in an autonomy which his own acts of judgement cannot reach. This necessitates, also, that judgement is no longer an action which discharges or validates norms in the self, only forgiveness and "hope". As such, Arthur is left with a wholly non-disciplinary relationship between subjectivity, knowledge and the normalising of objects of power. Values remain to him, but in an understanding that they are largely confined to individual consciousness, or are, at least, only to be grasped in the singularity of the subject's specific openness to a Cosmos assumed to be full of value: "Lo, I forgive thee, even as Eternal God/Forgives, do thou for thine own soul the rest". From this essentially mystic origin, he may offer values to the network of necessary and fully desired socio-historic and interpersonal relationships and continue his own life in their light. Yet he can have no certainty that they are repeated and confirmed there; can express their presence in the other merely in the mode of rumour or "hope"; and must suspend consciousness of them above the skeins of what he actually sees of the other. "Perchance ... / ... /Hereafter in that world where all are pure/We two may meet ... / ... /Now must I ... / ... / ... meet myself/Death, or I know not what mysterious doom" (G, 558 - 73).

What, then, is the overall significance of the figure of Arthur in the poem's representation of surveillance? Arthur's is the originating consciousness, the driving psycho-discursive practice, of Tennyson's Camelot. His internalisation of the norm is the most solid in the poem; the fluidity of his expressive practice the most fully

adjusted to the need in the society of surveillance to articulate the norm. Yet his modes of knowledge, demonstrativeness and interiority all call the mechanisms of his own regime into doubt. It is not that he fails to notice Lancelot's and Guinevere's liaison. The 1859 text shows that Arthur knows the "rumours" and senses something undisclosed both in "wife" and "familiar friend", but also suggests that there is no substantiation which would cause the rumours to seem true. It is rather that what the text offers as the structure of his practice is in any case non-disciplinary. We have noted, for instance, that the motives for his own normalisation do not derive from the circuits of observation, not even those of history. In him, that is, surveillance has no effect, produces no moralising transformation. We have now also seen that the cognitive and demonstrative parameters of the circuit of observation are not adequate guidelines either for inspiring the other's reformation or carrying through the subject's own. That is, the historiographic and poetic practices of the self whose terms match those required by the subject positions engendered in Arthur's regime of surveillance fail to constitute or give out a normalising form. This failure obtains at two crucial points of the disciplinary technique, highlighted by the turn to religion of the poem's three major protagonists.

First, it must be recalled that Tennyson's poem specifically examines the normalising force of what may be termed surveillance at one remove: relations of observation which have become psychologized and, more importantly, relations like that constituted by the press or by the position of the reader vis a vis the historian and the poet. Such regimes repeat the mode of knowledge and power of the classic,

institutionally confining surveillance, but in a diffuse and de-centred infrastructure which represents the efficient goal of the society of discipline. In Camelot, the Fourth Estate and the exchange between writer and mass reading public, only the threat of observation is continuous, not observation itself, and this threat increases at particular, demarcated moments. At the same time, the positions of subject and object of surveillance are not separate or fixed — individuals may take up one or other position, simultaneously or at different times. Correlatively, the origin of norms is displaced from a single, domineering source of judgement onto the interaction between multiple sources of judgement and the observation of those judgements. The calculation that such a decentred and multiplied mechanism will provide a ground of value is one that the figure of Arthur challenges. It is not so much that Arthur's love of Guinevere entails a wholly individualised source for schemes of value. It is that the fate of Lancelot, Guinevere and Arthur contradicts the notion that feeding impressive articulations of value into a machinery which makes value visible across social space will result in the normalisation of others or help themselves. The first two withdraw wholly from activities which hold up to the light their own acts of normalising judgement. Meanwhile, Arthur's self-revelation before Guinevere has a strictly limited audience and will not be repeated. Moreover, his removal of epistemological authority from his present judgement of Guinevere entails that the knowledge that would be presented in a representation of that judgement is false. In other words, what goes on in publicly clarified, circulating measurements, though consequential, as much deforms and obscures values as makes them impressive. This strikes down the central presumption of historiography and poetry as forces of social control. Both are

discourses which seek to inspire a heightening of moral consciousness merely by inserting compelling and normalised representations into the competitive and evaluative space of the literary market. Rather than seeing this ongoing interplay between such additions and the collective understanding of them as a self-corrective ground of true value, as in their various ways did Carlyle, Hallam, Mill and Taylor, Arthur's religious turn suggests it is null.

The other fulcrum of disciplinary technique at which Arthur strikes is its underlying epistemological structure: the structure of individualising and normalising knowledge. The most illuminating way to make this point is to examine the way the figure of Arthur adverts to and criticizes the typology of the Carlylean historian. It will be recalled that, for Carlyle, both historiographical and poetic practice are the function of a fundamentally religious vision which may also manifest itself in political leadership. Each discourse reveals the existential struggle of the other with its environment, though in modes of representation whose emphases differ slightly. In both, this struggle is understood as the subject's epistemological and expressive attempt to penetrate and body forth the sacred hear of value which conjoins the subject and its objects. Systems of belief or institution, great narratives, simple lyrics all splay out an intuition of "Divine Idea" that structures both perception of the world and the perception of the self. This resembles Arthur, a man whose political attempt to found a world-historical era ("be the fair beginning of a time"), and who bases that attempt conjointly on a militant metaphysical intuition ("the fire of God") and the formation of subjects committed to work upon and within a value-embodying social

milieu. However, Tennyson's construction of the religious epistemology to which Arthur gravitates contradicts Carlyle's. Moreover, this contradiction also undoes both the assumptions of any of the poetics and metahistory we have examined and the authority of individualising and normalising knowledge itself. We have already seen that, loving Guinevere and leaving her "own soul [to do] the rest" intimates a radical restructuring of the epistemological relation to the other. Though maintaining his own intuition and representations of value (his version of the "Divine Idea"), Arthur no longer couples and merges in an act of measurement his sensitivity to the interiority of the other and the apparent place of the other in the hierarchy of norms. Specifically, he posits that the other is a structure which he knows, and to which his relation is overwhelmingly intense, but which is not known fully and therefore not encloseable in a judgement fixing essence to value. To suggest that it is through this act of epistemological suspense that Arthur achieves a state of beatific perfection (released from judging Guinevere, Arthur "bless[es]" her and becomes "as an angel") snubs Carlyle. For the latter, the mark of world-historical impact, the definition of epistemological worth, is that the subject does grasp the other in a fully focussed intuition of the object's structures of identity and value. The subject's contact with sempiternal norms is always made identical to the subject's vision of its environs, so that even if the metaphors and systems of representation which embody both knowledges fail to be exact or lasting, the perfection of insight is an individualising and normalising moment. As we saw throughout chapters two and three, Carlyle held this assumption in common with a vast number of theorists of poetry and historiography. To represent the object as a thing whose identity was totally visible

and whose place in the table of types and values was clear constituted the foundation of both discourse's capacity to moralise the collective and the subject. Arthur, however, is represented as doing what such theory suggests is impossible. He retains a complex vision of the norm, moralises himself and inspires the other, but specifically by withdrawing from discipline's practice of articulating an individualised and normalised view of the other. Instead, he maintains a sense of suspension, positing unexplored spaces in the pysche, the future and the heavens from which values may emerge unpredictably, and whose force is precisely that they are hidden.

As a whole then, the world represented in *Idylls of the King* carries out a thoroughgoing deconstruction of the disciplinary technology of power-knowledge. Taking as its major concern the creation of a lawful interior life in the subject, it accepts but then hedges the procedures of surveillance and exemplary visibility. In particular, it gnaws on a contradiction within surveillance. On the one hand, the latter is a technology of the total objectification of those over whom it wishes to exercise power. On the other, it is a technology which must posit its objects as subjects — meaning not merely things which are subjected, but things with an independent motor of interiority. Attempting to reconcile each imperative it fabricates an experimentary social structure, in which subjects are both seen and unseen, seeing and not seeing. It proposes that the management of subjects by the law is to be accomplished in a fourfold movement: swearing them to an interiorised gaze; making them visible to a limited exterior gaze; demanding in them an expressive practice which satisfies the latter by objectifying the norms of the former; and demanding a hermeneutic practice

which allows itself to be affected by the face-value of this objectification. The poem examines the interweaving of these practices with the anxieties generated by the machinery of surveillance, exploring the psychic structures of surveyed individuals as these are given in contemporary historiographical and poetic practices of the self. These expressive and epistemological modes are shown to be pivotal to surveillance in their provision at once of the only dialogically sure means of impressing norms upon the other and the only means of ensuring that the judgements which fall upon it are accurate. At the same time, they are shown to be no release from anxieties of surveillance which galvanise the subject but also disrupt the circuit between normalisation of the self, knowledge of the other and demonstration of the self. Finally, the poem posits a self outside surveillance, whose mode of normalisation abandons the link between self and knowledge of the other, and also abandons the attempt to enfold the other in a disciplinary gaze. It suggests that discipline cannot reconcile the techniques of objectification and the autonomous subject of surveillance, rewriting the former as a provisional suspension of judgement before a vision of the latter as a thing whose unfathomability is precisely the only hope for normalisation. The poem thereby integrates the national and romantic themes of Arthurian subject matter with the reiterated insecurity about its epistemological mode seen in eighteenth and nineteenth century commentators on the corpus. It turns the mythos into a self-reflexive examination of its own condition of knowledge at the same time as it develops themes crucial to the nineteenth century social formation. It remains to ask whether the poem achieves this examination at the level of epistemological as well as narrative structure. Does the poem dispute the assumption both of historiography and

poetry that the reader should be presented with an individualised and normalised representation of reality? In other words, does give a disciplinary vision of the narrative deconstruction of discipline, or does it un-discipline perception, exposing the reader him/herself to the hollowed out forms its characters instantiate?

Discipline and the Structure of Idylls of the King

In the last two chapters, we have seen that the epistemological structure of discourse in historiography and poetry was understood in terms of a disciplinary relation between the subject of discourse and its object of knowledge. How does *Idylls of the King* function as a whole within this context? There are in fact two ways in which the poem approaches disciplinary form, corresponding to gazes turned on the unformed *Stoff* which is the poem's subject-matter and on the subjectivity which observes this *Stoff*. For many contemporary reviewers, as we saw in chapter one, the poem evoked a proper disciplinary resolution of both gazes. The poem's titular subject matter — the stories of the Arthurian tradition and female character — was treated in an individualising and normalising fashion, each narrative being linked to an implied epic of progressive state-building and exemplifying one of "the abstract character[s] of woman". In comparison with medieval legend, *Idylls* also purified and elevated the aesthetic consciousness with which poetry contemplated this matter. It was a more organised and focused consciousness, and also suffered less fantastication, less scandal and less vulgarity than the old writers did. This reaction

suggests that *Idylls* was designed to fulfil critical expectations about the internal epistemological relations of poetry (and, willy-nilly, historiography). Other responses, however, suggest otherwise. A substantial body of readers, including Carlyle, Elisabeth Barret, Matthew Arnold and Ruskin, argue that the poem is hollow, even solipsistic. It substitutes aesthetic or projective trifling for a serious response to medieval — or indeed any — modes of existence.[51] Among the reviewers, Patmore, Bagehot and Nichol note dissonance between the poem's responsibilities to its past object, its modern sensibility and the sempiternal types it represents. Both kinds of critique respond to different aspects of an epistemological structure of extreme complexity, which approaches discipline but renders it suspect.

We should begin by recalling the epistemology of lyric as understood by avant-garde and conservative criticism. In simple lyric, the poet finds analogues for the state of mind s/he wishes to express in natural objects, or in images of social relationship, religious symbol or narrative. More complex forms of lyric, however, including retrospective lyric, the lyric of projection or empathy and dramatic rendition of character, follow a more indirect, self-embedding cognitive model. The poet finds an analogue for the state s/he wishes to express in the image of a consciousness other than its own, engaged in quasi-lyric perception of the world. Tennyson's poem

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[51]See Christopher Ricks's chapter on *Idylls* for citations of their disappointed, or damning, verdicts. He adds George Eliot and Swinburne for good measure. *Tennyson*, 2nd edition (Macmillan, London, 1989), 250-61.

combines elements of both forms. On the one hand, Arthurian matter constitutes an "ideal" school of poetry in De Vere's sense: it is a vessel of simple lyric, a time and place other than the poet's, into which is decanted a dream of value.[52] However, in Tennyson, imaginative construction of this world is not completely free. For one thing, he reworks visions of this "ideal" world which already exist, evoking Camelot via stores about it told in late medieval and early Welsh sources. More interestingly, he complicates the whole notion of Camelot's free floating legendary status, envisaging its institutional and political situation through the work of eighteenth and nineteenth century historiographical work on sixth century Britain and the development of European chivalry. In other words, rather than being treated as a space for new idealistic narrative in the vein of Spenser, Arthurian matter is conveyed as an autonomous reality which cannot be approached except through representations of it which already exist. This includes the historiographical debate about Arthur and the medieval romance, as well as the characters and events of the literary tradition. Thus, individual narratives in Malory and the *Mabinogion* are adopted and revised; while the underlying narrative of the Kingdom is evoked then supplemented through

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[52]Bulwer Lytton's *King Arthur* (1848) exemplifies this, taking the characters of Arthurian tradition, a more or less historically plausible combat with the Saxons, and then arranging them in an invented narrative which is at once psychological allegory and a *roman à clef*. See Simpson, op. cit. for summaries of both aspects of the poem.

matter drawn from the likes of Sharon Turner and Henry Hallam.[53] However, it cannot be said that Tennyson represents any of his text as the product of an old Welsh, late medieval or historiographer's consciousness.[54] He does not set out to impersonate a bygone discourse, in the mode of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, or to impersonate any Victorian discourse but that of poetry. Indeed, the *Idylls* are narrated through a consciousness whose modernity is explicitly signalled: "nigh the city/Which now is this world's hugest". What *Idylls* does, in other words, is to summon up analogue consciousnesses as in complex lyric by using elements of other constructions of Camelot, but then denies these consciousnesses utterance. The epistemological structure of the poem remains that of a lyric consciousness finding echoes of itself in a determinate external reality,[55] but that consciousness is also

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[53]It should be pointed out that Victorian critics, in the main, unequivocally picked up only one of these layers: Tennyson's re-working of the medieval re-working of legend. As we shall see below, the signs which reveal Tennyson's historiographic interest only become clear in the light of specialist interests of which the majority of critics were not aware. John Nichol and Coventry Patmore, however, did note that the *Mabinogion* came from a different tradition than the other stories.

[54]The *Westminster Review* of *Idylls*, op. cit., 520-521 provides an extensive consideration of this subject, comparing Tennyson with a Browning who "recall[s] with historical exactness the modes of action, belief and feeling in the Middle Ages".

[55]G. M. Hopkins called this playing "Charades" with the Middle Ages. Taking far more inspiration from the remnants of medieval consciousness than Hallam or Tennyson — Hopkins invokes an equation between Galahad and a "Christian heroism" which, as a Jesuit, he believes is still viable — a poem which operated on Hallam's principle could not seem otherwise.

defined specifically against the voices whose representations of that reality it cannibalizes and stands corrective to.

What does the poem's critical lyric structure of representation entail in terms of the objects of knowledge of poetry? First, it evokes a number of gazes upon its matter which its own discourse rejects. It suggests that its own consciousness of Arthurian matter supersedes and encompasses these other consciousnesses. Second, it proposes a positive vision of the corpus, a view of the thing itself and the proper epistemological relation to it, which will replace theirs. In both moments of this structure Tennyson describes a critique of disciplinary knowledge which matches the terms of that given within the representation itself. He invokes a multitude of discourses which have the potential to form an individualising and normalising principle in the consciousness of Arthurian narrative, many of which were articulated in the contemporary discussions of Arthurian discourse we examined in chapter one. Each has a potentially historiographical or aesthetic orientation; each is made to replace another in a structure whereby historiographical imperatives are disrupted by aesthetic ones and vice versa. Consequently, the epistemological structure which represents Camelot takes readers through the same hermeneutic experience they witness within it. As they construct Camelot in the mind, they must do so by impersonating a multitude of disciplining mimetic foci, all of which the text allows to form, none of which is authoritative. This culminates in an epistemological stance before the object of the Arthurian corpus which repeats that of Arthur faced with Guinevere's soul and his own future. The poem enforces a structure of cognition

which contradicts discipline and gives an alternative to it. In its most crucial discourse of coherence, it repeats the strict epistemological duality of Arthurian narrative, positing its poetic integrity only in a speculative structure of ethical-institutional causality which mimic's Arthurianism's epistemological condition as history. This simultaneously exploits Arthurian discourse to undermine the disciplinary gazes of contemporary mimesis, and gives the experience of a new epistemology: the suspension of normalised consciousness before the unfathomable origin of value of the object.

The structural evocation and displacement of disciplinary gazes is a function of the poem's apparent drive to epitomize the underlying political romance of the Arthurian schema. As contemporary critics noted, the poem's rewriting of Malory and the *Mabinogion* makes connections between individual romantic episodes and the unfolding fate of the Kingdom as a whole. Each is seen as a participant in one and the same causal skein: the corrosive moral effect of "one sin". Bringing out this epic unity is what allows the poem to encompass and supersede all previous versions of the corpus. It is this which suggests that the object of imagination projected by any Arthurian storyteller — the vision of a Kingdom, a ruling institution, lives lived under it — has so far been misgrasped. This means that it can only maintain its superiority by convincingly demonstrating the genetic unity of its own representation. As such, it generates an expectation that Tennyson will enfold the corpus in an exceptionally complex instance of the individualising and normalising gaze. It will not only link romance and Camelot's fall with the ramification of "one sin", it will represent that

"sin" in such a way as to show how it could have been destructive on that scale, and what the destructiveness means in broader human terms. The poem will be realistic about what could cause the downfall of a Kingdom, and also clear about the mode of mimesis it intends in that portrayal. It is at this level that Tennyson's uncertainty about the mode of power-knowledge presumed in contemporary discussions of mimesis exerts its force. Rather than being a simple embodiment of one genre of disciplinary representation, it focuses as many as the epistemological duality of Arthurianism allows. In other words, it evokes and displaces disciplinary gazes specifically as possible ways of normalising the corpus as a story of a state's rise and fall.

The most powerful model for such a representation in Tennyson's day was the model of historiography. That is, one way of making the corpus whole is to see in it the materials for a work like Bulwer Lytton's *Harold: The Last of the Saxon Kings* (1848) or Henry Taylor's historical dramas. Such a work would give Arthur's kingdom a determinate historical period, see in its personal conflicts the working out of a profound clash of historically appropriate ethical and political principles, and envisage its fate as an exemplary episode in the world-historical progress of humankind. Despite the thinness of contemporary historiography in the face of Arthur, Tennyson does not simply ignore this possibility. On the contrary, he focuses two historiographical understandings of Arthurian discourse, generating an implied narrative whose form corresponds to that of the historiographical model, but whose content distorts its individualising and normalising gaze. He firmly situates Camelot

in the politics of sixth century Britain, but just as firmly makes it epitomize the cultural problematic of medieval chivalry. This move cannot be dismissed as mere window dressing — Tennysonian nerves about accurate local colour — because both elements in the text reproduce their historiographical referents with great precision, in such a way therefore that the disjunction cannot be smoothed away.[56]

Neither of these historiographical elements in the poem has received scholarly attention before, so it is essential to spell out their details. First The military and constitutional action of the poem matches a consensus about the sixth century arrived at by those historians and antiquarians who believed the bare bones of a historiographically illuminating narrative could be drawn from the earliest sources.

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[56]Henry Kozicki's argument that the completed *Idylls* dramatize a Hegelian myth of the epochal rise and fall of nations and civilisations suggests a yet further historiographical context: that of the conclusions of speculative metahistory about the form of the historical process as a whole. Kozicki is right in identifying this as the source of the framework of moral cause and effect which the poem sees as determining Camelot's fate. For my purposes, however, it is more important to stress the specific references to practical historiography. It is these which give substance and ballast to any representation of the sort of "general truths" Kozicki draws attention to. It is these, in other words, which raise the question of historiography as discourse in the poem, rather than as mere intellectual source for its principle of thematic and narrative unity. F. E. L. Priestley, picking up on Tennyson's remark about the poem representing the life of an individual, a kingdom and an epoch, also suggests a way of approaching *Idylls* as a multiple epistemological structure. His seminal discussion, however, is not concerned with the specific question of the relation between the subject of the poem as a Victorian subject, and its objects as medieval objects, as I am, and the contemporary reviewers were.

The King is not a feudal monarch: he gained the throne because "the people chose him", not through primogeniture. As "Pendragon" he does not have absolute legal authority over the whole of Britain. He is *primus inter pares*, surrounded by a multitude of semi-independent and — as we gather from "Enid" and "Guinevere" — disputatious and oppressive "tributary princes" and "lords". His core territory stays within the counties historians established for Arthur: Wiltshire and Berkshire, with influence extending further west (courts are held near London and Caerleon-upon-Usk, the poem's action is all in the south of Britain) and battles to the North.[57] Moreover, his main concern in the poem — the attempt to establish a cohesive and remoralised Celtic nation — reflect a situation all historians agreed on: Britain's precipitous and fissiparous moral decline "after the Roman left us".[58] Finally, the overall military situation corresponds to historical consensus. "The pagan" hardly appear, for Badon, dated by Turner in AD. 530, scotched the Saxon threat for a

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[57]Turner places Arthur's writ "in some part of Britain near its southern coasts" (Turner, *History of the Anglo Saxons*, op. cit., III, 265). He has friends in Cornwall and Devon; and fights in Portsmouth, Bath, Wales at to the North. Particularly illuminating confirmation of this occurs in an obscure archeological pamphlet — whose ideas Tennyson nonetheless knew — which uses the evidence of boundary ditches to establish a geography for Saxon and Celtic polities in the sixth centuries. (See Edwin Guest, "On the Early English Settlements in South Britain")

[58]Gildas's highly-charged condemnation of British cowardice, short-sighted selfishness, and preference for cruel, treacherous and rapacious leaders was widely quoted, though not taken as a wholly disinterested account.

generation (the period of "discreet silence" about Saxon advance in the Chronicles).[59] The kingdom collapses from within, as Arthur fails to re-educate the immoral, opportunist mentality of his fellow nobles.[60] Second, quite separate from this, the

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[59]"This victory checked the progress of Cerdic ... The Saxon was penetrating onwards even towards Wales or Mercia; he was defeated and did not advance. ... [Arthur] permitted Cerdic to retain his settlements in Wessex; and such an acquiescence accords with the Chronicles, which asserts that, after many fierce conflicts, he conceded to the Saxon the counties of Southampton and Somerset. The latter however was still contested" (*History of the Anglo-Saxons,* III, 269-70)

[60]All these points are extended and confirmed in the subsequent Idylls, particularly the point about Arthur's constitutional position. (See Arthur's legal restraint from attacking Mark and Pellam — exacting, indeed, "tribute" not tax — though realpolitik and moral outrage dictates he should.) Also noteworthy is the match between the period of Arthur's unmolested rule in Turner (AD. 530 - 42) and the twelve year period critics have identified for Camelot in *Idylls.* The anomalies of the strife with Rome in "The Coming of Arthur", and the pagan recidivism which emerges in the Vivien of 1885, though not strictly conforming to historical fact, do nevertheless dramatise situations which historians associated with Arthur. The first corresponds with testimony Turner quotes from one Salvian of Marseilles, on hostility to the "oppressions" of late-Roman "tax-gatherers" in Gaul, up to and including the desire to relinquish Roman rule and citizenship. He also mentions a tradition that one Riothamus of Britain went to the aid of the inhabitants of Gaul against the Visigoths, adding "Either this Riothamus was Arthur, or it was from his expedition that Jeffry, or the Breton bards, took the idea of Arthur's battles in Gaul" (Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 211-14; 248 and fn.) The pagan recidivism is all that remains in Tennyson of the Druidic conspiracy theory retailed in Algernon Herbert's inventive *Britannia after the Romans.* The landscape in which "The Passing of Arthur" is fought out, meanwhile, introduces a complication germane to the expansion of epistemological concerns in the second tranche of idylls. "Lyonesse" — a temporary volcanic realm — is not

Round Table casts into one generation the whole historical project of European Chivalry as it was understood in Victorian historiography. The analogies are surprisingly strict.[61] Historians tended to split the history of chivalry into two phases: a Dark Age military institution of Teutonic origin, which developed between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries into a complex cultural force. In its first phase it linked personal honour to conspicuous acts of strength in the public defence, a task swiftly expanded to include openness and honesty of character and the special kudos of protecting the weak — that is, women and priests. Its second phase further develops the sources of honour, replacing mere brawn, ale and bawdy with social graces and artistic accomplishment. Two forces are seen as facilitating this change. On the one hand, the older form is associated with a crisis of policing, identical to the one Arthur faces, which early medieval monarchs strove to reform. Kingdoms were a playing-field for a baronial chivalry which scorned the King's writ, and whose extravagant rapacities were only relieved by the haphazard intervention of unattached knights eager for reputation ("knights-errant"). Kings encouraged a more refined

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historical, but apocalyptic and legendary. This adds to the historical scenario, but does not render it void.

[61]The following paragraph summarizes information in the following texts. Henry Hallam, *View of the State of Europe During the Middle Ages*, 7th ed., 3 vols. (London, 1837), iii, 456-511; Mills, Charles, *The History of Chivalry, or Knighthood and its Times*, 2 vols. (London, 1825), i, 1-43, 118-71; Sharon Turner, *History of England During the Middle Ages*, 3 vols. (London, 1814 - 23), i, 131-46; Warton, Thomas, "On the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe", *History of English Poetry*, 2nd edition. (London, 1775); Dunlop, J. C., *History of Fiction* (London, 1816), 177-88.

court life to redirect baronial energies and centralise judgement. On the other hand, women — whose peculiar virtue and strength of character in Teutonic tribal life already made them a powerful source of approval — began to exert a preference for sobriety, elegance and fewer beatings. Their standards only increased as times became less rough-hewn. As can be immediately seen, the vows reproduce every aspect both of the institution and its historical development: its expansion from a military to a police to a cultural force; and the link between its change and the enlargement of the gazes of the King's juridisdiction and women's sexual preference. Similarly, Tennyson is careful to have chosen stories which correspond both to an earlier and a later period of chivalry. (The *Mabinogion*, though in its origin not a story about knights, has Geraint border a land in which nobles are salacious, hard-drinking bravos.)

What does it mean to introduce these two historiographical discourses? In the poem, it would seem that dovetail so that the narrative as a whole has the format of a historical poem. Behind the *Idylls* is the story of a profoundly important historical shift, played out in the fate of a single historical episode. However, because the two halves of this form derive from such divergent historiographical discourses, what is in fact suggested is that there are two historical poems, neither of which actually gets written. On the one hand, the underlying genetic unity of Tennyson's poem and the Arthurian corpus, it is suggested, is that it recalls the travails of a Romano-British state, fighting to retain its religion, its civilisation and its independence in the aftermath of the collapse of the Western Empire. On the other hand, this unity is to be

found in the mirroring of the mid-medieval and pan-European struggle between forces of decentralisation and tribal chivalry and forces of centralised power and refinement. As proposed grounds of normalisation, the implied historical epic structure and the two alternative historiographical judgements which would focus it, thus displace each other. Each half of the structure renders the other half (and the epic based on it) non-identical with itself. Yet each historiographical discourse only provides half of the requisites of a historical epic, so the only way to make up the disciplinary structure of representation is to use both — and construct a narrative whose content does not bear out the form. The consequence of this is not merely that it is a blind alley to suggest that *Idylls* is a historical epic. It is rather that the poem's narrative structure has deliberately invoked two historiographical judgements on the matter it represents, but rejected them because they cannot focus a complete representation of all that is real about that matter. After all, if it is true that the origin of the story of Camelot is post-Roman Britain, it is equally true that, by Malory's time, it had become, in Thomas Wright's estimation, the text-book of the complex ideal of medieval chivalry. Moreover, the condition of Arthurian discourse makes it impossible to say that either proposition yields a historically real institutional basis for the legends: both the sixth century Arthur and the medieval ideal of chivalry may be literary inventions. In other words, any disciplining of Arthurian matter as historical epic must be suspended not only because the historiographical gaze which focuses it is multiple, but because the historiographical gaze cannot grasp Arthurian matter as its own kind of truth.

Does this not simply leave the way clear for a characteristically aesthetic

normalisation as the principle of unity of *Idylls* and the Arthurian corpus? That is, thought the yoking of sixth century Britain and medieval chivalry does not comply with an integration of the poem based on history's mode of representation, it does provide a satisfying and suggestive aesthetic shape. Can the whole corpus not be envisaged simply as the image of a Christian King establishing an idealistic state: a symbol for the progressive civilisation of the West and its desperately complex ethical, epistemological and political conditions? Such a view of *Idylls* was in fact what Victorian commentators who liked the poem believed its structure to be. They was its vision of King Arthur as an exemplum of the highest ideals of Man, its vision of the imagined state for which he fought as a symbol of the highest human aspiration, and its vision of that State's downfall as a tragic but profoundly humane endeavour. They also averred that such a representation did not require the precision of history for it to have realistic effect, only the ballast of its material having been imagined by many people in diverse historical situations, and the social and psychological situations it depicted being central and comprehensive. This suggests that to question whether *Idylls* treats the gaze of poetic discipline as it does that of historiography is to question the elements of the poem favourable Victorian critics identified as signs of its unity and value. It is to identify those elements as discourse invoking the aesthetic gaze, and to ask whether they in fact bear that gaze out.

What then are the aspects of the poem which evoke a poetic integration of the Arthurian corpus? Victorian critics identified three. First, the poem linked the whole legendary sequence of Arthurian story in an implied narrative of the ever-widening

destructive ramifications of one "adultery" on the King's attempt to create law, civility and nationhood. Second, it represented this sequence through a series of domestic tales which composed a typology of womanhood: "the true woman doubted, ... the false woman successful in her wiles, ... the woman loved and unloved, ... the woman loved, first false, and then repentant".[62] These two strings are unified, and the causal sequence mooted in the first seen as effective, because they are the formal manifestation of the idea of medieval chivalry considered not as the material of history but as an instantiation of perennially interesting problems of society and spirit. It will be recalled that historical chivalry was seen as being galvanised by two forces: the harnessing to more and more refined purposes of social cohesion of a warrior identity based paradoxically on self-sacrifice and personal glory, and the pivotal influence of the approval of strong and virtuous women. In other words, it was a subject which broached burning questions of competitiveness, law and order, individuality, sexual relations and a ruling identity which was not mere force. It centred these broad social problems on romantic and evaluative relationships — just as the poem did It should be added that the subsequent decline of chivalry was seen as stemming from a sexual laxity for which its ideal of courtly love had no deterrent. In other words, "one sin" could exemplarily be regarded as undoing its spiritualising work. Each of the elements of the structure of the Arthurian cycle as given in *Idylls* can therefore be seen as objectifying the peculiar individualisation and normalisation of the aesthetic gaze. They embody in a newly created representational phenomenon

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[62] *Fraser's Magazine*, 60 (September 1859), 301.

the essential characteristics of an "Idea" — in this case the "Idea" of a particular historical and political development, but an "Idea" nonetheless. The third aspect of the poem's Victorianism — its avoidance of the scandalous in the original stories — also contributes to this process of disciplinary crystallisation. There are three areas in which the *Idylls* are said to "soften" the moral edges of the original stories. They clarify the representation of chivalry as an ideal, playing down the promiscuity and casual, repetitive violence of the medieval stories. They remove the greatest scandal of all — Lancelot's and Guinevere's adultery — from representation. They provide the "extenuation" and explanations of a more developed psychological representation than was available to romance for actions which seem unheroic or unladylike. (This is most conspicuous in the case of the Queen and her lover. Less convincing, for many critics, were the cases of Enid's caste-threatening patience, Geraint's suspiciousness and Elaine's proposal.) Though each of these devices adapts representation to mid-Victorian bourgeois standards, they also each pertain to its narrative and thematic unity. The clarification of chivalry is a condition of the poem's narrative structure. To occlude the adultery is an objectification of the mode of its effect as "the little rift" which destroys the kingdom: its open, but unacknowledged, example. The fuller psychological development is a manifestation of its interest in the domestic and the private, which is itself the manifestation of its formal appraisal of the conditions and effects of female approval.

The question then arises: does the poem fully substantiate these requisites of a Victorianist aesthetic gaze? The answer is that the poem dramatises such perceptions

without fully endorsing them. Let us first examine the notion that the poem is focussed by a typology of woman — a representation of something always true about women that in the context of the poem connects the problematics of sexual relations and social stability. The proposed typology turned on three binary oppositions. Women were loved or unloved; doubted or trusted; sincere or insincere in their affections. At first sight, the poem appears not only to present stories which starkly exemplify such oppositions, but shows them answering to the pivotal socialising force the vows give an 'innocent', trusted, loved woman's standards. The poem, it may thus be said, explores the constitution of such a "womanhood" and its effects, exemplifying its force through the various ways in which it fails of full instantiation. It draws attention to this normalisation in the titles it gives each poem: "Enid", "Vivien", "Elaine", "Guinevere", each the name of a woman. That this is not the whole story is suggested by the fact that Tennyson soon changed the poem's names so that they made the couple, not the woman, their focus. The poem does indeed offer an analysis of the gaze in female hands, but one which displaces the disciplinary status of a normalisation based upon the female "type". As we have already seen, the poem explores problems of hermeneutics in its female protagonists which are in no way gender-specific, but relevant to Arthurian polity in its general search for modes of knowledge which successfully accomplish the subject positions of surveillance. How the poem's four women see, what they see and how they express what they see turns on their differing anxieties about these positions, broaching complex differentiations of personality for which a normalised knowledge of femininity provides no evidence. Vivien and Guinevere, for instance, both "false", "loved" and "trusted", both "scorn"

Arthur. Yet the cognitive substance is vastly different in each case. In Vivien "scorn" means lurid insensitivity to any value; in Guinevere a sophisticated, romantic sensibility frightened by historiographical logic, charmed by the idyllic romantic poetry of refined sensation. Again, Elaine and Guinevere in the guise of "true" and "trusted" women each see the "noble" loveliness of Lancelot. Yet in one it is the activity of an expressive poet's intense, emotionally pure self-exfoliation; in the other, the flipside of that troubled indecision of critical taste which retreats from Arthur. Enid and Elaine, meanwhile, both "innocent", express themselves according to their "meek" and "wilful" characters, not according to their sincerity. At the same time, however, the *effectiveness* of the female gaze does depend on the three oppositions which govern normalised knowledge of them. This, not surprisingly, is because these three oppositions cover what is important for a male surveillance concerned with the value of a woman as a mate. For instance, Vivien's power over Merlin has no connection at all with the quality of her gaze, everything to do with his "his own wish in age for love". She can perpetrate any "slander", so long as she keeps him in the "half-belie[f]" that she is "true", and desirable, and trustworthy to him. From the opposite direction, Enid's influence on Geraint is also no function of her independent — though "meek" — capacity to perceive what is good in a man and good for him. Her overheard critique of his dereliction cannot bring about reform, because he is consumed by a distorted sense of her love and faith. This drives him "to the wilds" as it has already from Camelot. Only when restored to full belief in her can he listen even to her solicitude. There are, then, two ways of knowing women in the poem, both with a certain validity. One sees women as distinct personalities, reproducing

these in modes of perception and self-expression which are at once appropriate to them and representative of general themes of representation and surveillance. One sees women as a social force — which in the context of Arthurian monogamy means sorting them into a very few categories dictated by a male gaze. Of these possibilities, the second objectifies the Victorian aesthetic gaze — but it is the first, if any, which provides an individualising and normalising knowledge of women themselves. It is the first which sees the women as distinct personalities which also embody a representative function. The second, instead of being such a knowledge of the "abstract" essence of women, is a knowledge of women's relationship to men which sees that relationship from the point of view of male anxiety. In other words, the disciplinary gaze is deconstructed, as the poem represents what the Victorian aesthetic wants to see, but in a form which renders what it sees no measurement of what belongs to its object, and therefore no properly disciplinary knowledge at all.

A more complex deconstruction occurs in the question of the poem's candidate for what gives the Arthurian corpus its genetic unity. The assumption is that the unifying narrative motor of the poem is not merely its investigation of the history of Camelot but specifically the "one sin" of Guinevere and Lancelot. The question for us is not whether it is fair to give a single action such determining force, but the mode of efficacy this proposed genetic principle is supposed to have, and the way we come to know it. In *Idylls*, besides the opinion of a wide-eyed simpleton and the guilt-wracked party herself, the only argument for this genesis comes from an exhausted "Ghost" of a husband. Arthur's argument has three strands. One, anticipated by Lancelot, is that

his and the Queen's "crime" positively leads people astray: it provides a bad model for them to follow. Another, anticipated by Vivien, and masquerading as a vision of what a public reconciliation would cause, is that its example sapped Arthur's authority as King and husband (MV, 779-87). Third, the thought of available womanhood it supplies plants temptation in the "blood" and suborns the ethical ideas of "half the young" (G, 515-9). All of these analyses depend on the same epistemological and hermeneutic assumptions. The adultery triggers public demoralisation because it is ungainsayable knowledge, prompting men and women to think that life is something in which strict morals — fidelity and self-sacrifice — are not important. In other words, the adultery has causal power because it is a starkly individualised knowledge of norms opposed by the King. It feeds into the circular process in which true representations make values impressive and moralise subjects according to the postures of the representation. The poem, however, suggests that the adultery exemplifies a slightly different epistemology and hermeneutics, and therefore a different social causality. As Eli Adams stresses, there are no eye-witnesses to the adultery. (The nearest is Modred — who actually sees not adultery but separation.) As the action of "Enid" and "Vivien" especially demonstrates, this does not stop "rumour" being given the status of eye-witness proof. In this scenario an image or interpretation, not the adultery itself, is what inspires evil-doing, prompts lascivious thoughts and undermines the King's public acclaim. Moreover, the cognitive activity by which people arrive at this image, as every one of the *Idylls* shows, is a process Merlin calls "imput[ing] themselves" (MV, 824). This representational process, though still glamourising turpitude, is wholly self-generating. It neither originates

with Lancelot's and Guinevere's "sin", nor do they positively contribute even in the mode of allowing the "base" to rationalise their own standards. After all, the very evidence for such rationalisations arises only from such solipsistical projections as Geraint's hankering for reassurance about Enid even before he hears any "rumours" about Guinevere, and Vivien's wildfire defamation of every knights' qualities (leaving "Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean"). In other words, the cause of breakdown is not the "sin", or even knowledge of it, but a social process whereby fragments of information take on the form of an individualised and normalised image without relating to anything except the beliefs and neuroses of the expresser and interpreter.

Where does this leave Arthur, and the disciplinary gaze that seeks in the poem a causal unity which inflects some sempiternal moral or intellectual principle via the specific narrative conditions it represents? At first glance, it simply shifts the focus from chivalric processes of sexual choice to chivalric processes of public acclaim. It suggests that the kingdom falls because the arbiters of glory can express only self-imputing, "brawling judgements" (MV, 662-3), rather than those of some more dis-interested and sophisticated gaze. In fact, it is precisely here that the poem most seriously undermines the notion that there is an observable genetic unity that could make the Arthurian story an individualised and normalised form of its own. First, Tennyson has represented the causal circuit of interpretation and expression as a massively dispersed, multiple, atomistic process, in which all the contradictory approaches to the task of knowing and representing Camelot's central values stem

from each individual's relation to that larger process, not to Guinevere's and Lancelot's "sin". Second, Tennyson has suggested that the subject positions engendered by the epistemology of acclaim cannot sustain any gaze which is free of the solipsistic structure we have noticed above. As such, within the polity which depends on acclaim and observation , there is no gaze to which the truth or non-truth of the rumour of the "sin" would make a difference. In other words, though the image of the adultery draws the reader's attention to ways in which much of social process turns on confirming values in acts of knowledge and expression over and before the peer group, the adultery itself appears to have little force of its own to change that process's direction.

This does not mean that the text simply rejects Arthur's analysis. There is a third mode in which Tennyson offers Guinevere's "sin" as the genetic principle of the Arthurian corpus but qualifies the way it provides that unity. It can be asked why "base" interpretation should have proved more successful than Arthur's "overfine" variety — why, that is, there should have been more subjects whose know and express the norm like Guinevere or Lancelot or worse than like Arthur. The poem shows that Arthurian expression does not spread not because people positively imitate his Queen, but because she and they alike are thrown into a position of anxiety over their potential to live in public proof of their Arthurian subjectivity. Moreover, to act in the world as Arthur does, to live in "That pure severity of perfect light" which constitutes his subjectivity and objectivity under surveillance, is not the correlative of imitating him, for his pyscho-discursive practice is never seen: he maintaining always an

apparently unruffled, dialectical surface never shaken by temptation or fear. It must instead be an autonomous discovery of how to dissipate what Guinevere calls "colour[s]" of perception —"humid light": all the imagined normalisations of self and other which derive from fear of losing what the self is invested in, from desires which do not conform with what is seen as "the highest", or from a dependence on "worship" from the other. They are overcome in an encounter where the uncertain subject of surveillance comes to know its other as an unfathomable source of values, rather than as a term in a disciplinary relation. That is, faith and morality depend on ceasing to conceive other human beings as objects or subjects of power and knowledge whose overt incarnation of one's own vision of the norm serve as proof that the self is normal. Geraint's rebirth under Enid's mute demonstration of her truth, Edyrn's under the "power of ministration" of Guinevere's "kind, yet stately" court, Arthur's regaining of himself through religious understanding, Guinevere's under Arthur's drained, vituperative, despairing, uncoordinated restatement of passion: all conform to this vision. There is a sense in which the need for such an encounter opens a responsibility which is Guinevere's more than anyone else's. All the healing moments in the *Idylls* arise when an uncertain subject witnesses a surveillance which poetically expresses a judgement upon him or herself which is forgiving. It appears from what Guinevere does for Edyrn, and from Arthur's response to her beauty, that she and the court over which she presides is the institutional expression of this kind of judgement. Together with Lancelot, she incarnates the self which at once proffers a beautiful, winning expression of the norm, and a relation of knowledge and power with the other which defers its individualisation and normalisation. If this is so, "the

adultery" *can* be said to link narrative causality and moral meaning in the *Idylls* — but in a different way to the one Arthur (or the Victorian aesthetic gaze) articulates. The poem objectifies not a decline caused by the adultery's example, but a decline which — as the Bard prophecies — "well might" have been arrested by a solider "wife" and "friend". As a principle of aesthetic structure, the adultery thus combines morality and narrative not by linking them in causation, but by linking them in a corrosive absence of causation — the invisibility of the only figure which the text suggests has the potential to steer its narrative away from catastrophe (a "woman in her womanhood as great/As [Arthur] in his manhood" (G, 297-8)).

This is important because it means that *Idylls* deconstructs the disciplinary aesthetic gaze with a vision of the Arthurian corpus which returns to the epistemological condition of historiography. The Victorian aesthetic gaze presumes that the epic narrative of *Idylls* should be so manufactured that its events manifest a causal integrity which reflects an underlying moral or intellectual principle. As we have already noted, such a genetic narrative was also the prerogative of history, but history could not provide such a narrative with Arthurian materials. The information they provided about the downfall of Camelot was insufficient for historiography to link its institutional forms to its political fate, leaving the historian only able to speculate about what really happened in the sixth century and about what was behind the Arthurian corpus. Basing his vision of the unity of the Arthurian story on a "sin" which causes everything, but only because the sin's absence "might" have allowed another cause to take its place, Tennyson repeats this structure. The principle of

aesthetic unity is not a genesis which is traced or even implied, but an absent genesis whose effect is speculated upon. This is the "inward perfection of vacancy" Carlyle complained of: it spirits away from under the reader's nose precisely that visible connection which a disciplinary gaze requires, leaving instead only the structure of a desire — a need — for connection. This experience is reinforced by Tennyson's removal of the "sin" itself from representation.

One further consequence of this treatment of the proposed unity of the Arthurian corpus needs to be noted. Making the poem turn on an absent genesis does not mean that it dismisses those values of Christian perfection, romantic love, the replacement of personal violence by the law, the search for truth, sophisticated expression and beauty which the image of chivalry is supposed to provoke. It does not reject either the ideals themselves or the minds or institutions which seek to make them count in individual or social life. However, it does rule out a disciplinary vision of those values, and therefore make them things which may only be held provisionally. Rather than have them emerge as a logical consequence of what their subject sees, it evokes them as something potentially confirmed in that image, but also potentially negated or surpassed by it. It gives an object of knowledge which is coherent, but whose coherence resides in the subject's postulation of a principle of unity which the subject admits cannot be seen. It gives an object of knowledge which represents values in this organic principle, but in which the linking of value to principle is cast only in the most uncertain auxiliary mode. It thus constructs a subject in whom values are present, but an object which can neither be measured by those

values, nor even constituted as a single object ready to be measured by them, and which is yet held as a potential source not only of those values but others. This is the very structure Arthur turned to as angelic. It does not imply that the subject is made to doubt his or her values, but that the subject comes to acknowledge them as things which may be superseded, in ways that cannot be fathomed, and which must therefore be experienced as a kind of hovering epistemological hesitation in the midst of commitment. The only difference with Arthur is that, as the epistemological structure of a poem, Tennyson need not move outside the tradition of aesthesis. Rather, suggesting that there may be a mode of expression and knowledge which permits integrity, truthfulness and beauty outside the model of individualising and normalising knowledge, he identifies the new mode with the poetic rather than the religious.

CONCLUSIONS

The structures of feeling and faith which Tennyson represents in King Arthur and leaves as the epistemological experience of the Arthurian corpus are not new in his work. Precisely the same tension between the mind's attachment to values and the way a loved object must be known emerges, for instance, in Christopher Ricks's remarks about *In Memoriam CXXIX*. "When you understand someone deeply, you do indeed understand them more ... love makes you more aware of the mysteriousness of another ... For Tennyson what counted was not his faith in good but his love for Hallam."[1] Similarly, the notion of a hesitation in Tennyson's temperament, the "unquiet" veering between the closure of values or something more open, has been a commonplace of Tennysonian lore since T. S. Eliot noted of the elegy that its "doubt" was a finer thing than its "faith". Tennyson's liking — especially in the longer poems — for forms which confuse attributions of structure or firm viewpoint has also, from

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[1] C. Ricks, *Tennyson*, 2nd edition (Basingstoke and London, Macmillan, 1989), 212.

the beginning, exercised critical imaginations: often in an attempt to rescue "strange diagonals", the "diary" of elegiac sequence or the unstable speakers of monodrama. What has rarely been explored is the relation between these tensions and the social function of poetry as a mode of knowledge in the nineteenth century. From one point of view, Tennyson's structures have been ascribed to the inability of a lyric genius, or one whose *forte* was "a slow depositing instinct" whose greatest verse "pause[s] and slowly pivot[s] upon itself", to construct narrative, drama or, one might say, any teleologically sustained discourse. From another, they have been seen as attempts to reconcile the conflicting political imperatives of Victorian Britain's bourgeois patriarchy, necessarily fissured by the contradictions of ideology and language. They have not been understood, however, as attempts to revise/compromise individualising and normalising knowledge as a technique of poetry. To conclude this thesis I want to suggest some further avenues for pursuing the question of disciplinary representation in Tennyson's poetry and to point out some of the broader theoretical and historical implications of his undermining of that technique.

Much among Tennyson's early lyric verse directly inspires the notion that a poem should comprise a unique moment of perception and judgement, a movement in which consciousness rounds upon its own flux. The poems about idealised women, "The Ballad of Oriana", "Mariana", "The Lady of Shallot", "The Merman", "Supposed Confessions of a Second Rate Mind", "The Ode to Memory", "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" — all form texts for some utilitarian or conservative critic's delineation of some form of normalising lyric. Even at this stage,

however, having for critical purposes invented or at least perfected the poem which at once inhabits and looks down on a single state of mind or art or being, Tennyson was trying out techniques which deliberately blur the focus of evaluation or even identification of the objects of poetry. The epigraph of "Mariana", for instance, and the narrative preambles to "The Hesperides" or "The Lotos Eaters", pose unanswerable questions about the status being accorded the consciousnesses evoked in the lyric bulk of each poem. Is Mariana's aghast sense of abandonment and ennui to be seen straightforwardly (as J. S. Mill thought) — the acme of languor and despair, the correlative for a precise measurement of mood? Is it to be seen, conversely, in the context of the allusion to the story of *Measure for Measure* — as a meditation on the dependence of the female psyche, with all the detachment and compassionate devaluation this implies? Similarly, is the Lotos Eater's celebration of "ease" or the Hesperides' invocation of mystic, asocial art to be understood as a commended or compromised state? The point is not so much that these structures offer more than one norm against which to compare consciousness, as that they make it impossible to consummate a mode of knowledge which precipitates an exactly specified entity as the prelude to judgement. For instance, the narrative context of the Lotos Eaters' song confuses the state their song evokes as well as throwing into question whether its withdrawal is seen in a celebratory, disapproving, pitiful or degraded light. Does it represent the sailors before they eat or after — a state of exhaustion and longing for rest, or the compulsively drained rationalisation of the addict? What the reader is left with mirrors what we have seen in *Idylls of the King*. An object is evoked with great richness and complexity — but rather than being

allowed to integrate and enclose it in an act of evaluation, we are left to explore potential integrations and evaluations. We view the objects of discourse not as things we can control, but as a source from which values emerge and are reabsorbed frequently, frustrating the attempt to see it as anything but a mystery.

Tennyson's longer works also put increasing pressure on the disciplinary assumptions we examined in the last chapter. The parallel between Princess Ida's tastes in poetry and her analysis of political change, for instance, is straightforward enough. In her pomp she composes and praises political poetry of a direct, revolutionary cast, rejecting the nostalgic blandishments of "Tears, Idle Tears". The final act of her conversion to gradualism, on the other hand, comes about when she lies open to the disciplinary poetry of affective evocation and associative manipulation. Neither philosophical argument nor the realities of international power-politics change her — two poems in the most seductive mode of dramatic lyricism Tennyson can imagine do. With both these poems Ida encounters the kind of displaced surveillance, the complexly inverted mutuality of roles, and the dependence on the hermeneutic situations of poetry, that we have seen Tennyson exploring in "Enid" and "Guinevere". Having been the "Head" of a College, she has become the director of a hospital, keeping constant watch over her patients, especially over an abnormal male.[2] She is, in other words, the subject of an institution of surveillance.

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[2] Tennyson's interest in abnormal males is explored by a number of critics. See, for instance, Marion Shaw, *Alfred, Lord Tennyson* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, New York and London, 1988), 59 - 98.

However, she has by this point in the poem also seen the failure of her institution, its supplanting by a gaze she had attempted to exclude but which, in her role as woman in a patriarchal social structure, must follow her at every moment and in every place: the male eye. Indeed, the building which "no man" should have seen — the site of her attempt to re-normalise women through surveillance — has now become a network of male gazes: "Swarms of men/Darkening her female field".[3] She is therefore also the object of the institution of surveillance. The situation in which she abandons her own project and submits to the Prince's personify this doubleness. The poems themselves are both representations of the male gaze upon women, representations of the desirousness and interiority which is expressed in the male objectification of woman. At the same time, they are not the direct approach of this surveillance upon her, only its representation, and she remains in the position of medical supervisor: the Prince is, so far as she knows, still in a "trance" which suspends that gaze (he listens with "shut eyes"). The model, in other words, is that of Geraint overhearing Enid. The normalisation of the object is accomplished when it witnesses the subject of surveillance's *poetically* delivered individualisation and normalisation, in a situation where the object is not directly being addressed and is also in the position of the observer of the observer.

This is not the end of the story, however. Although within the fantasy narrative the intense reciprocality of surveillance is effective, within the frame

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[1] *The Princess*, VII, 18 - 9.

narrative it is only disturbing and thought-provoking. The young feminist Lilia, to please and educate whom the fantasy narrative has been improvised,

> ... plucked the grass,
> She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt
> A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
> "You — tell us what we are" who might have told,
> For she was crammed with theories out of books,
> But that there rose a shout. ("Conclusion", 31 - 6)

The fantasy thus leaves its addressee in an upset state of suspended and questioning urgency which the frame poem does not attempt to resolve. Postponing the discussions of teenager and aunt, it turns to a "genial" discursive dis-authorisation of any articulation of the norm which can be achieved by the reader: "maybe wildest dreams/Are but the needful preludes of the truth". The point is not that the manoeuvre jettisons political gradualism or makes the poem as a whole less committed to the view that women should please men and be nurturers. It does not entail that anyone abandons their position — social or otherwise. It merely entails that positions are held and acted on without the view of things which they entail being regarded as a perfectly true vision of what the world is and what the values are which it incarnates. It is exactly the same as happens with Arthur. What is rejected is a mode of knowledge, not the content of the cognitive act, the technique of power, not the particular direction it tends toward.

In Memoriam and *Maud*, both register an increasingly troubled trust in poetry as a socially effective mode, which emerges as a questioning of its disciplinary epistemological structure. Both poems confront, through the topic of lyric expression, a possibility which *Idylls of the King* generalises: that the gaze which allows objects to be known in terms of human values, and which communicates interiority by expressing this evaluation, may be solipsistic and unfounded in its very form. This gaze is that individualisation and normalisation of segments of "Nature and human life" which makes up the "images" of a poem: those through which individualised and normalised interiority may be sympathised with. In these poems, intense experiences of value, even those which found a life which is acceptable to the norm, are seen to be detached from the reality of the objects which inspire them. They have the form of disciplinary knowledge, without the conviction that this form is anything but a delusional structure. In the former poem, "doubt" (*In Memoriam* XCVI) "stri[kes] through" any knowledge of the value of things which appears in the light of yearning and "Sorrow" — even when this knowledge is at its most visionary, unformulaic and 'naturally supernatural'. Though the narrative of psychological recovery from grief downplays it, such doubt is never rebutted, merely catharsized and put to sleep. *Maud*, on the other hand, as Coventry Patmore put it, is so constructed as to confuse the boundaries "between the sane and the insane" in perception. Exploiting the identical structure of hallucinatory and poetic modes of pathetic fallacy, the work suggests that the most "extraordinarily high poetic sensibility" is in fact a dangerously

infectious "irresponsibility".[4] Explicitly, these poems do not confront the relation between the mode of knowledge they question and poetry's social function. They do make it impossible for the values which formed the ideology of the Victorian bourgeois state to receive confirmation in the mode of knowledge on which poetry was supposed to rely. They do not investigate this question of technique in a way which suggests that the technique has wider contexts than that of poetry and personal mental stability. It is *Idylls of the King*, however, which explicitly widens the focus of Tennyson's interest in surveillance so that it extends throughout the social fabric, and appears in the non-pathological constitution of the central relationships of mid-Victorian society: the heterosexual couple and its link with homosocial national institutions.[5]

What, then, are the broader implications of what Tennyson does in *Idylls*? Let us recapitulate the poem's essential points. Tennyson posits the unity of the Arthurian corpus, the unity of the implied story of the state of Camelot, in the working out of the mechanisms of social control implied in the ideology of medieval chivalry. Among those mechanisms, he focuses especially on the realisation of centralised judicial authority, and the invocation, direction and sublimation of male aggression in institutions which personify that authority. Among the techniques of these

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[4]Coventry Patmore, "Tennyson's *Maud*", op. cit., 510.

[5]See Margaret Linley, "Sexuality and Nationality in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30 (Autumn - Winter 1992), 365-86; and Linda M. Shires, "Patriarchy, Dead Men, and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*", *Victorian Poetry*, 30 (Autumn - Winter 1992), 401-19 for discussions of these themes in relation to imperial power.

mechanisms, he concentrates on one above all others, namely, a machinery in which all things flow from the observation and judgement of people's actions, that is, of surveillance. This is not merely a matter of imposing the authority of a ruling elite. It is also a matter of policing the policers, of getting them to buy into a new kind of practice of the self, as a condition for any kind of general civilisation. In order to encourage them in a form of self-normalisation which concerns their relation to sexual desire, to speech, to the laws and institutions of the land, and to their own ethical subjectivity ("conscience"), the members of the Round Table are bound to three external sources of worth and good things. They are subjected to surveillance by the monarch, their chosen sexual partner, and by a democratic discourse which constructs an image of them to the nation and posterity partaking both of fictional and historical elements ("fame"). The judgements meted out in these relations are re-inforced by offers of power, wealth, recognition and sexual and emotional fulfilment. What the poem takes as its central theme, then, is the effectiveness as a force of social order of practices of the self born under the relations of surveillance.

Since the elite is small and its concentration of "prowess" new, Camelot's surveillance is built upon a paradox. It needs to establish subjects of surveillance who can deal out judgement according to the King's norms, both to carry out the "redressing [of] human wrongs" outside the court, and to normalise the knights themselves. However, it can only do that by making all the citizens of the Kingdom simultaneously objects and subjects of surveillance, knights and ladies watching each other and the populace, populace watching the knights and ladies by way of

reputation. To try to "leaven" this circularity and reciprocality, the Round Table emphasizes the element of surveillance which made of it a theatre of demonstrative and winning representations of normal behaviour by those charged with judgement in it. The practice of the self demanded of each knight and each lady, the element examined in depth by each of the *Idylls*, is then epitomized in their artful construction of a mode of speech which smothers actions and people in swathes of enthusiastic moral appreciation: "high talk of noble deeds". This speech specifically avoids negative tones and negative judgements, disallowing "scorn" or "slander", leaving known "shame" in decent silence, and relying on appropriately placed statements of what the positive is to convey to a subject that they need to change.[6] There are two consequences of this. First, it opens up the practice of the self required of the subject-object of surveillance to the model provided by historiographical and poetic practices of the self. In other words, it suggests that underlying the processes of self-normalisation under surveillance is a process of discursive normalisation. The relations to ethical responsibility, to society, and to inner passion go through and are accomplished in a relation to knowledge and expression. Second, it makes that practice precarious, because of the need to detach the individualising and normalising statement of knowledge from the actual judgement itself. This need insinuates behind the disciplinary discourse a ghost discourse full of harsh ridiculing potential: a

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[6] Thus, in stern mood, Arthur does not tell Gawaine he is wrong, so much as turn Gawaine's interpretation of the law inside out: "Deeming our courtesy is the truest law" is capped by "Seeing ... Obedience is the courtesy due to Kings" (LE, 710 - 13)

discourse in which Arthur's norms are continually broken but which is truer than his, and therefore becomes a source of deep anxiety (Vivien personifies this discourse). Since this need arises from discipline's own presumptions about how to affect the subject — it is what gives a space for autonomy and affectivity to internalise the norm for itself — it therefore suggests a mite of solipsism in discipline that would in fact disable it.

Each one of the *Idylls* explores the instabilities in the practices of the self which arise in this model of discipline as reciprocal judgement and representation. It presumes a cast of characters who are properly socialised for surveillance in that their self-esteem, their actions and mode of action is tied to their relation to its subject. It takes as its text the crises engendered in such characters given the endemic gap in Camelot between knowledge and reality, and between knowledge and expressed knowledge. It presents a critique of the practice of the self which underlies surveillance and which is incarnated in various ways in poetry and historiography: the assumption that the activity of self-normalising can be assured by having the subject interpret what others are in relation to the norm, demonstrate to them what the law is in oneself, and find out what the norm is in these activities. There are a number of approaches from which this critique is made.

In the first of the *Idylls*, Tennyson examines simple insecurities in the male and female subjects of chivalry. He sees extremes of braggadocio and humility, of colourful and "grey", poetically sensational and poetically reserved relations of the normal self to society, as expressions of unease about the sincerity of the

apparent approval of the subject of surveillance and about the norm that it intends in the self. Enid fears that court and Prince are not so unconcerned about her lack of external signs of worth as they are presented as being, and struggles with a timid self-censorship partly generated by materialistic estimates of being a Prince's "true wife". Geraint fears that Court and wife are thoroughly contemptuous of his inexperience and lack of sophistication, and struggles against a sensational vision of being "generous", devoted and brave which compensates for uncertainty by exaggeration and immediacy. Tennyson suggests that all this may be righted in an overdetemined harmonisation of the relationships of surveillance and those of the hermeneutic relationships of poetry which also suggests there is something missing in the regime. Right reading of the norm and of the subject of surveillance's judgement of the self depend on overhearing that judgement as the subject of surveillance's defiant and linguistically heightened self-objectification under the immediate threat of a surveillance which personifies the subject's anxieties about surveillance. This apparently indicates that surveillance requires a nuance middle path of expression, self-exfoliating and non prosaic but also not overblown or too invested in communal images of the norm, as the correlative both of normalising the self and demonstrating it so as to normalise others. However, its terms also indicate that the subject must be able to choose from among different surveillances and must abandon the attempt to bring the other's apparent behaviour under a normalising judgement. As such, the idea that surveillance can assure a spiralling upward of behaviour toward the norm is undermined, as normalising the self comes to depend on a detachment of the self from the regime's own forces.

In the second *Idyll* Tennyson examines two more models of a practice of the self which reacts to the epistemological rift in the regime of reciprocal surveillance. Both are directly and self-consciously discursive attempts to maintain the self's sense of its normality by adjusting and governing what things are said and the way things are said, focusing exclusively on the democratic eye of the nation's and posterity's story-telling rather than the eye of the lover. Each attempts to fix discourse in a different form from the equivocal pattern of a forbearing poetic evocation of self and other "Enid" puts forward as the correlative of normalisation, one which, unlike that, will break down the difference between appearance and evaluation. Merlin spends his days attempting to downplay both the unrealistic and speculative elements of reputation, both in those who desire it and those who construct it. He hopes to turn discourse into the rigourous but humane and unjudgemental vision of the norm of historiography, correcting factual misapprehensions, positing extenuations and forgiving imperfections in the light of a common commitment, not denying that slips exist but also not making them destructive to know about by positing that only a superlative performance is good enough. Vivien, conversely, enraged and embittered by the "dream" of surveillance's ghostly, second, scandalising and abnormal discourse spends her days trying to bring it to the surface. For her, the difference between appearance and evaluation is "hypocrisy", the correct response to which is a discourse of commercial poetry in which insincerity reduces the norm to appearances only. The encounter between these two discourses suggest a further questioning of the discursive conditions of surveillance. Historiography is shown to fail the task of seeing through the mask of commercial poetry, because its own expressive motions

have repressed sensitivity to the subtle signs of poetry and because they are unsustainably draining. The principle of expressive and interpretative forbearance which results from the historian's view does not like the poet's validate the self's commitments (for it implies no faith in the other) but merely leaves the self more solitary.

The third poem in the sequence presents three characters who ostensibly incarnate the poetic capability to know the norm's objects acutely, to express them in such a way as to spread the good news and allay the bad, and to follow the norm by a poetic reading of the subject of surveillance's self-expression. However, these characters confirm Merlin's suspicion of the poetic mode, going in more depth into the analysis undertaken in "Enid". Intuitive, self-imputing richness of impression and expression is seen to be a practice which leaves the self dangerously reliant on the images to which it commits as representations of its own normality and of the non-accuracy of surveillance's threatened abnormal surveillance. Both Elaine and Lancelot find themselves enthralled and undone by the interplay between a neurotic structure of determination to cut an exquisite figure before surveillance and the tendency of poetic sensibility to lose its self-determination in its sensitivity to the other as image of itself. In Elaine this means that, having sunk herself in the "fantasy" of relationship to a subject of surveillance conceived as brilliant, she has no power to "withdraw" her love because of what loss of the subject of surveillance means to her as a refugee. In Lancelot it means that, compensating for orphanhood by a fantasy of richly artistic feminine approval and being "Fair as a King's son", he is cast into

enslavement by the dual subjects of surveillance which incarnate this fantasy. These failures are all the more serious in that both Elaine and Lancelot are seen in the poem as powerfully acute interpreters and representers of the norm. They inspire and fascinate the Court and each other: they are the "greatest knight" and an icon "For all true hearts". They are, to a great extent, surveillance's glorious successes, so that their failures reflect as much on the institution as their peculiar circumstances. In this vein, they suggest on the one hand that investing the self's normality in individualised and normalised images of the world, however sensitively measured and produced, is too inflexible a practice for the epistemological rift that reciprocal surveillance requires. It is not just that Elaine dies, but that her death is suicidally induced (a factor the myth of the "broken heart" eludes) and therefore a desperate break with the norm. (A similar breakdown occurs in "Pelleas and Ettarre".) On the other hand, they suggest that the relationship to surveillance as a practice of the self posits too impoverished a principle of self-determination for the self to fulfil the task of self-normalisation.

The final poem in the 1859 text brings out the implications of all that has gone before. In Guinevere, reciprocal surveillance is a tactic which brings the self only to the brink of reform, as a movement from historiographical to poetic representations of the norm bite upon her, and as she hesitates before becoming an object of a surveillance in which the King's and the hidden representation will necessarily combine. Normalising the self becomes dependent on a shift of the institutions which administer norms. At first this appears merely to substitute a fully fledged

confinement of the subject for the intangible walls of King, lover and "noble talk". On closer examination this turns out to be a willed self-objectification whose epistemological terms displace surveillance onto a relation which cannot be mediated by any earthly individualising and normalising of the self. Guinevere will not hide who she is from the nuns, but neither their judgement, the Kingdom's or Arthur's can have any bearing on the source of judgement to which she is now committed. At the same time, surveillance as a set of relations on which to build the normal self is thoroughly decomposed by the figure of Arthur himself. While his own practice of the self combines elements of historiographic and poetic modes, self esteem is in no way connected to what the subjects of surveillance he institutes around him will judge him to be. In fact, when he is tempted, normalisation is achieved by a practice of the self which is quite outside the economy in which integrity depends upon knowing the other and representing the norm in a disciplinary relationship. It is not only that, having found in the interplay of historiography and poetic projection only an encouragement to the aggression which he is set to sublimate, he decouples the relation between normalising knowledge of the other and the self. It is that he realises a relation to the other in which individualising and normalising knowledge is suspended in love and a sense of the unfathomable mystery of the other.

What bearing does this have on the development of the institutions of discipline, and of historiography and poetry as elements of social control? There are two major impacts. One concerns the reciprocal surveillance which is the theoretical model for a poetry and history which take effect through the intermediary of the

market. Insofar as these were offered as model selves rather than model knowledges — as intimations of what a world-view which results from a properly disciplined mind is — the poem places severe doubt on their comprehensiveness. Rather than providing an adequate substitute for religion, they prove unstable though never nugatory means by which values are apprehended and spread and through the pursuit of which valuable lives can be led. The reason for this, however, is the very structure of disciplinary knowledge itself. That is, Tennyson's mistrust is not directed at the uncabinned, reciprocal and uncentred mode of surveillance which models poetry and historiography: it is not a question of saying that surveillance does work, but only when judgement is strictly confined. It is not even a question of saying that the underlying structure of surveillance which guarantees a normalising practice of the self in epistemological and expressive practice is suspect. It is, rather, a questioning of the whole notion that a normative regime is a sufficient ground of value. It questions whether truth, stability, peace, self-restraint, generousity, love, justice, fidelity, marriage, sanity, hierarchy, meritocracy, directed masculinity — the names of the highest "norms" of bourgeois patriarchy — can be founded on a specific epistemological assumption. That is, it throws doubt on the idea that the entities which must be the foundation of any social order — subjectivities, specific human beings, their relationships to themselves, each other and institutions (the objects of knowledge of poetry and history) — can be made to yield the norm if they are only understood as things encloseable in an individualising and normalising judgement.

The problem Tennyson identifies with this mode of knowledge is twofold.

The subject of individualising and normalising knowledge is dangerously open to a solipsistic reliance on the other conforming to the terms of his judgement. That is, because the subject of surveillance is under no obligation to look for anything other than the particular norms about which s/he is concerned, the complexities and anxieties of the subject of surveillance (which is always a particular human subject) are liable not only to distort judgement but be given deranging force. In other words, the practice of the self which is implied by surveillance is in itself destabilising. At the same time, the vision of the human individual which it bestows is seriously flawed. Normalisation cannot be achieved without the subject acquiring a belief in its ability to act alone and unsupervised. The epistemology of individualising and normalising judgement posits no space in its object from which this belief could arise. The only autonomy it posits is the autonomy required to see the norm and act according to it. While the autonomy surveillance implies in its use of representations of the norm does go further, it provides no more guidance as to how that autonomy is to be garnered than the mode of the subject of surveillance itself, which, as we have just noted, is flawed. As such, the subject which the whole project of surveillance implies — the fully autonomous subject, malleable but also possessing a principle of radical, self-generating change, which is the object of knowledge of poetry — is left curiously emasculated by the techniques of surveillance. It is this subject which Tennyson envisages in the figures of Guinevere and Arthur, and the kind of epistemological object they form which he incarnates in the undecideably dual object of knowledge of Arthurian fiction. It is a figure which surveillance requires, but cannot bring into being; a figure which when it does appear necessarily escapes the

regime itself.[7]

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[7]With the usual irony of these things, Tennyson is turning the very thing the technique of power posits as its condition of success into the thing which conditions resistance to it.

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